

Manly Daily 07.02.11

Little ripper, nipper

BY LAUREN DICKSON



Gregory Gurtata, 9, rescued two adults at Long Reef Beach on Australia Day.
Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG ~PP432351

HE may not be able to wrap his arm around his board but nine-year-old Gregory Gurtata rescued two adults from drowning at North Curl Curl beach.

The Collaroy nipper was in the water testing the surfboard he got for Christmas when he heard screams of distress from a man and woman.

“I was just surfing and heard people yelling for help so I paddled over to help them,” Gregory said.

“They were screaming and waving their hands and I knew that meant they’re in trouble.”

What Gregory did next was well above what would be expected from any novice lifesaver, let alone one of his size.

“I made sure I kept the leg rope on me and I gave them my board to get on,” he said.

“Then I pushed them on my board on to a wave. I kept one arm on the board and kicked to keep us on the wave.”

Gregory’s mum Naomi said there wasn’t much left for her to do by the time she got to the water.

“It was after 6pm so there weren’t any lifesavers around,” she said.

“By the time I got out there he had already got to them and rescued them.

“The surf was reasonably big and the woman was pretty shell shocked when she got to the sand.”

Collaroy nipper chairman Martin Bowyer said that Gregory’s keen participation in the under-10s program has played a big part in boosting his courage in the water.

“He is always the first to get out and give things a go.” Mr Bowyer said.

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