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■ Max Moore won the Search and Rescue Person of the Year award in the EDP Stars of Norfolk Awards. In his absence his mother Nicola Moore and aunt Katy Moore picked up the award. Nicola Moore, right, receives the award from Fiona Ryder, managing director of Mustard TV.

PICTURES: DENISE BRADLEY/SUBMITTED

A lifeguard who saved the life of a teenage girl off the north Norfolk coast said he was "just doing a job" following praise over his bravery at the EDP Stars of Norfolk Awards.



Sea rescue award winner says he was just doing the job he loves

Max Moore, 19, from Brewery Road, Trunch, won the Search and Rescue Person of the Year award at St Andrew's Hall in Norwich.

Mr Moore, a former Gresham's School pupil, was on patrol on Sea Palling beach in August this year when he swam to the rescue of a 14-year-old girl who was swept out to sea by a riptide.

The girl, from Northampton, believed to be called Courtney, was walking along a sandbar off Sea Palling with a male family friend when the tide pulled the pair underwater and dragged them about 70 metres offshore.

She was unable to swim, and battled to stay afloat with her friend, clinging to her in a desperate bid to keep her head above the waves.

With the pair rapidly tiring, the man faced the dreadful choice of

In the fourth of our profiles on the Stars of Norfolk winners, **DONNA-LOUISE BISHOP** finds out more about one man's bravery



whether to stay with Courtney and risk both their lives - or swim to shore and leave her.

As the seconds ticked by, Mr Moore, a senior lifeguard at Sea Palling, swam out to the pair.

A first year student studying finance and investment management at Northumbria University, Mr Moore has been an RNLI lifeguard for four summer seasons.

He reached Courtney quickly and used a float to take her to shore.

The man was able to get back on his own, while Mr Moore treated Courtney, who was in shock and had swallowed a lot of water.

A keen surfer and swimmer, Mr Moore said: "I noticed two swimmers wading out on the sandbar that leads

to one of the rock reefs. It's an area where we have lots of rescues, so I started heading over to tell them to come back.

"But before I got there, they were swept off the bar by the current. They were pulled out into the deep water. Her life was in immediate danger. Her friend would only have been able to keep her afloat for a little while."

He added: "Courtney was a non-swimmer and was with her parents' friend. She grabbed him and was hanging onto his shoulders.

"He was going underwater as well as he tried to keep her afloat. I went out with a rescue tube and clipped her in. I took her back to shore."

Mr Moore said he was "not nervous" as the adrenaline kicked in. But he admitted it was the most dramatic of a number of rescues he had been involved in.

Courtney was not believed to be

seriously hurt, but was taken to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

Mr Moore said: "Whoever was on that day and put in my position, the outcome would have been the same - I was just doing a job."

Unfortunately Mr Moore was away on a university trip to the London Stock Exchange and was unable to attend the awards ceremony.

His mother, Nicola Moore, and aunt, Kate Moore, accepted his award, sponsored by Mustard TV, on his behalf. A massive rugby fan, he received two tickets to see rugby in Leicestershire.

Mr Moore added that he was already looking forward to returning to "the best summer job ever" and showing any new lifeguards "the ropes".

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