

## 26 hours 41 minutes in Lake Ontario forever changed the life of 14-year-old Annaleise Carr and for many others along the way.

And for her exploits and inspiration, Annaleise Carr, a Canadian teenager, was selected as the 2012 World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year.

Swimming for others takes on a profoundly deep meaning when a swimmer is so young and the conditions are borderline wild.

The Lake Ontario Swim Team member is the epitome of selflessness as she selected Camp Trillium to support. Her efforts have touched the hearts of people throughout Canada and the world, generating nearly \$250,000 in donations for the Trillium Childhood Cancer Support Centre.

While the media and public have continued to celebrate the wunderkind, her grounded personality has stirred even greater efforts to raise awareness and funds for child with cancer. She trained, she swam and she continues to give of herself. Her generosity of time, her sincerity of spirit, and her depth of passion are easy for people to see.

Like her fund-raising activities on land, Carr's efforts to complete a 50.5 km swim in Lake Ontario through the night over wind-generated waves in plunging water temperatures never wavered. In fact, the youngest 24-hour Club member drew motivation every time her crew told her that more donations were pouring in.

The public understands a heroine and Carr is one. For a maturity beyond her years and for her deeply felt commitment to raise money to support children with cancer, the new Lady of the Lake was worthily voted as the 2012 WOWSA World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year.

The World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year award is meant to honor the woman who (1) best embodies the spirit of open water swimming, (2) possesses the sense of adventure, tenacity and perseverance that open water swimmers are known for, and (3) has most positively influenced the world of open water swimming during the year.

It was an incredible year of firsts, mosts, bests, fastest and courage by thousands of individuals in the open water swimming world. While Carr



**ANNALEISE CARR**  
2012 World Open Water  
Swimming Woman of the Year

was voted Woman of the Year, the other 2012 nominees were also outstanding representatives and ambassadors of the sport:

1. Ana Marcela Cunha (Brazil), World Professional Marathon Champion
2. Anna-Carin Nordin (Sweden), Oceans Seven Swimmer
3. Annaleise Carr (Canada), Young Marathon Swimmer
4. Catherine Vogt (USA), Dual Olympic Coach
5. Diana Nyad (USA), Xtreme Dreamer
6. Esther Nuñez Morera (Spain), Professional Marathon Swimming Champion
7. Grace van der Byl (USA), Marathon Record Breaker
8. Janel Jorgensen McArdle (USA), Swim Across America President
9. Julia Washbourne (Hong Kong), Eco-Swimming Aquapreneur
10. Karen Gaffney (USA), Swimming Philanthropist
11. Keri-Anne Payne (Great Britain), British Open Water Icon
12. Pat Gallant-Charette (USA), Channel Swimming Late Bloomer
13. Risztov Éva (Hungary), Olympic Champion
14. Shelley Taylor-Smith (Australia), Pioneering Administrator
15. Tina Neill (USA), San Clemente Channel Swimmer

Carr joins the previous World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year recipients: Olympian and world champion Edith van Dijk (Netherlands) in 2008; professional marathon swimmer Poliana Okimoto (Brazil) in 2009;

channel swimmer Anne Marie Ward (Ireland) in 2010; and professional marathon swimmer Pilar Geijo (Argentina) in 2011.

In the online public vote conducted by the World Open Water Swimming Association, another incredibly unselfish inspiration Karen Gaffney of the U.S.A. received the second highest number of votes. Like Carr, Gaffney is a champion in every sense of the word: a humble heroine and a remarkable role model who moves people to action. The English Channel relay swimmer has dedicated herself and the tools at her disposal to champion a journey to full inclusion in families, schools, communities and the workplace for people with Down syndrome or other developmental disabilities. With dramatic open water swims to emphasize one's potential, as well as her speeches, video tapes and resource materials, she constantly installs hope for others with Down syndrome. Her lifestyle proves a full productive and inclusive life is in store for parents and families of a child born with Down syndrome or other learning disabilities.

With Carr in Canada and Gaffney in Oregon, the two young women have a talent and passion to heighten awareness and raise expectations and funds for those in need.

In one of the most awe-inspiring years of open water swimming on record, the community salutes all the WOWSA nominees and Anneleise Carr in particular for her selection as the 2012 World Open Water Swimming Woman of the Year.

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