

My name is -----, and I was staying at a campground (I think called Horse Creek) outside of Sequoia National Park on August 20th, I believe. We saw a presentation by a woman who was raising money for you and by a ranger, who gave a talk on drowning. The next day, my husband and sons were hiking/swimming at a waterfall area just inside the park where a big group of Mexican people were hanging out enjoying the day. My family went hiking behind the waterfall, and two of the girls from the group were swimming around in the shallow part of King's River. The ranger had described that drowning is silent, and the victims often move their arms like bird's wings flapping. One of the girls squealed, and they were splashing around. They had slipped on a rock into an area too deep to touch. Everyone around thought they were playing, but because I had heard that talk the night before, I knew they were in trouble. I immediately jumped in the cold water (I didn't even notice the temp., because my adrenaline was so high) and swam to them. One of the family members noticed I was rushing to them and jumped in as well. I believe he was the only person there who knew how to swim. I went to the bigger girl, and he went to the smaller girl. Unfortunately, the smaller girl was panicking, and she was pulling the boy under. He became so scared, he left her and swam to the side. By this time, the family was screaming, and two men from down the river came to help. Thank God. I don't think I could have supported both of them and gotten them to safety, since the little girl was pulling so hard. The men got her, and I pulled the bigger girl to a rock and pushed her up on to it. We were all exhausted and very shaken up, so we just sat there on a rock for a long time. A woman nearby said she thought they were just having a good time, and she would have never known they were in trouble. She also said she couldn't swim, and that she couldn't have helped me anyway. It was probably the scariest day of my life. I'm afraid if I hadn't heard that ranger the night before, I wouldn't have known they were in trouble either. There were probably 20 people there, but only one knew how to swim (though not very well) I am grateful to God that I can swim, and that I was there. We easily could have all been there when two girls drowned. I cringe to think of it. When I tried to show the girls how to float in case that ever happened again. I also suggested they look for a YMCA nearby and take swimming lessons. I assured them they could learn. They had never heard of YMCA. Most of their family could not speak English. I wish I had suggested that they never go around or in water without a life jacket, but I never thought to. I wonder if someone in your community could go to schools and encourage kids to learn how to swim and warn them of the dangers of drowning (if that is not already being done). Anyway, is there any way you can figure out who that ranger was so I can thank him? I can't thank him enough from the bottom of my heart for what he did for me. I cry every time I think of it.