



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

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News Release

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Boy in Critical Condition After Being Pulled Out of Kings River

An eight year old boy is listed in critical condition at Valley Children's Hospital after nearly drowning in a portion of the Kings River in Parlier.

Around 4:30 pm on September 15th, Fresno County Sheriff dispatchers took a 911 call for a report of a child drowning in the Kings River. Patrol deputies, members of the Boating Unit and Air Support were dispatched to the call near the intersection of E. Lincoln and S. Lac Jac Avenues. It was the EAGLE One helicopter crew who was first to arrive in the area. They spotted family members on a small island in the middle of the river and landed there. The deputy working as a Tactical Flight Officer (TFO) got out, ran over to the boy and carried him back to the helicopter. As the pilot lifted off, the TFO performed CPR on the boy. They landed on a bank above the river where EMS was waiting with an ambulance. Medics took the boy and transported him to Adventist Medical Center in Reedley. Patrol deputies picked up the boy's family members and drove them to the hospital. Later in the evening, the child was transferred to Valley Children's Hospital to receive specialty care.

Deputies contacted family members of the boy and learned what happened. In the afternoon, a group of approximately 10 people launched their rafts into the Kings River near the Goodfellow Ave. Bridge. They tied the rafts together with ropes and all children in the group wore life jackets. As they floated downstream, they approached a fork in the river. They drifted into some branches and all of the rafts popped, flipping them into the water. The boy's father and his girlfriend realized the ropes holding the rafts together got wrapped around the child, pulling him under the water. The strong current made it impossible for the woman to swim upstream to reach the rope, so she swam to the shore and was able to grab the rope and untangle it. After being underwater

for several minutes, the boy was released and he floated downstream. His dad grabbed him and pulled him out of the river and onto an island. He and his girlfriend took turns performing CPR on the boy. Another a group of people traveling down the river in a kayak made the 911 phone call for them. EAGLE One arrived to their location about 10 minutes later.

The Sheriff's Office would like to remind people to be safe while doing activities in and around water. Take simple precautions such as: Wear a life jacket, stay out of the water if you're not an experienced swimmer, do not mix alcohol and swimming and invest in good quality floating devices (rafts, tubes) constructed of durable material. Respect the power of rivers and stay aware of debris. A common hazard encountered in rivers is known as a strainer. This is where large objects like rocks and trees allow water to pass through, but not a person, which causes them to easily get stuck and pushed under water. It is extremely difficult to rescue yourself from a strainer. It typically requires emergency help from trained rescue personnel.