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W-S native helps rescue two children from rip current at Kure Beach

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

On Sunday, April 18, Winston-Salem native Antonio Burns, who is a well-known photographer and videographer, was enjoying a nice, relaxing day at Kure Beach when screams from the water caught his attention.

"The screams just didn't sound like a playful scream," Burns said.

Two children were caught in the rip current and struggling to get out. When he realized what was happening, Burns and Jessica Embry, another beachgoer that day, jumped into action and saved the two girls. Tragically, Embry died.

A rip current is a strong, localized, and narrow current of water that moves directly away from the shore, cutting through the line of breaking waves like a river running out to sea. When describing the rip current that day, Burns said it was a "two-way pull," pulling him under the water and even farther from shore.

Before entering the water, Burns said he and Embry, who he had never met before, only exchanged a few words. "She said, 'You



Antonio Burns

Submitted photo

get this girl and I'll get that girl' and I said OK," he said.

Burns said he only remembers coming up for

air three times and that the last time he saw Embry, she was holding one of the girls above the water, although she was completely

engulfed. "I distinctly remember seeing Miss Embry holding this little girl in the air and all you could see was her arms," Burns

said.

After battling the current and with help from a few other rescuers, Burns, Embry and the two girls made it shore. On the shore, Burns lost consciousness. He said the last thing he remembers seeing is paramedics trying to revive Embry, but she died at the scene.

Burns was rushed to the New Hanover Hospital, where he was placed on a ventilator and stayed for four days. It has been reported that the two girls who were rescued are doing fine. Burns credits Embry for leading the rescue mission.

Embry, who was an orchestra teacher at Eugene Ashley High School in Wilmington, helped start a group called United Sound, which paired special needs students with those in her orchestra class. Through that partnership, the students were able to get hands-on experience with instruments and learn how to play music.

"Long live Miss Embry! That lady was the leader of the operation ... she was Batman, I was just Robin," Burns continued. "I just wish it would've played out different because that was a great

lady; just from doing my homework on her, that was a phenomenal lady."

When discussing that day with The Chronicle earlier this week, Burns said he never had any second thoughts about going in to save the girls and if he had to do it again, he would, because if it was his daughter out there, he would want someone to do the same thing he did.

"I went into that water thinking I have a daughter, I have a niece, I have a little sister ... what if the tables were turned and they're in that situation and I can't help them?" Burns asked. "Yes, I would want someone to help me, so I'm just blessed to have that spirit and that energy."

Moving forward, Burns said he would like to help educate local families on rip currents and water safety. He said with summer just around the corner, it's critical that we do our homework

"Please do your homework on these beaches and water safety. If you're not an experienced swimmer, go with someone who is," Burns said. "We have to take it upon ourselves to educate ourselves on water safety."

Forsyth County Sunday School Union wraps up food distribution program

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Last week the Forsyth County Sunday School Union (FCSSU) wrapped up a partnership with the Farmers to Family Food Program that provided

hundreds of boxes of food for families in need.

The Farmers to Family Food Program was launched in April 2020 as an effort to leverage surplus produce, dairy and protein to support local farmers, food distributors, and families impacted by the pandemic. Minister Velma McCloud, coordinator of the Forsyth County Sunday School Union, said when she received the call from a distributor with the program in S.C., she leapt at the opportunity.

"I just count it as a blessing to be able to provide during this time of need and it's God's way of showing us his grace and mercy," McCloud said. "We live in an area where people are food deficient,



Photo by Tevin Stinson

For the past 12 weeks the Forsyth County Sunday School Union has distributed boxes of food to more than two dozen churches in the area.

so the fact that we've been able to bless people for 12 weeks is a blessing."

The boxes of food

contained two proteins or meats, milk, fruit, potatoes, and vegetables. On distribution days, more than two

dozen local churches rented Uhauls, brought pickup trucks, trailers and even church vans to pick up the

boxes of food. Each pallet distributed to the churches included more than 40 boxes of food. Volunteers from Galilee Missionary Baptist Church made sure the pick-up process ran smoothly.

Rev. Chad Armstrong, director of ministries at Galilee, said since they had already worked with the Farmers to Family Food Program in the past, they already knew they had the infrastructure to help with distribution, so the partnership between the Forsyth County Sunday School Union was a no-brainer.

"We had the infrastructure and the volunteer support staff to collaborate

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