

Aniak youth saves infant's life

On Sunday, June 2 at 6:54 p.m., Aniak 911 received a call from Brian Kelila, 14, of Aniak. Kelila reported, in a very calm manner, that a baby had drowned in a water bucket across the Aniak slough from town. Because of his calmness, Kelila was told to start CPR.

The Aniak Firefighters and Dragon Slayers -- a youth volunteer group -- were notified by beeper and, according to preplan, went to the FAA landing to transfer to boats.

No boats were found with gas, so several of the volunteers left to get other boats. Six volunteers decided to push a boat across. Where the slough was too deep, they paddled with their arms and kicked.

Lamont Albertson, who resides across the slough, saw the activity, met the motorless boat and provided his four-wheeler to the crew. It took about seven minutes from the time the call was received until the fire department arrived at the home.

Upon arrival, the medics took over CPR and within 30 seconds restored a heartbeat. Soon, the 16-month-old boy began breathing again. He was transported to the Aniak Subregional Clinic where he received additional care and was later taken to Anchorage by LifeGuard Air Ambulance.

Kelila had taken a 10-hour CPR/First Aid class at the Aniak Middle School. The class, part of Steve West Johns' health class, was taught by the Aniak Volunteer Fire Department as part of their "FireFly" program.

Aniak Fire Chief Pete Brown said Kelila's quick call and good, effective citizen CPR were the reasons the child was resuscitated.

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