

Lesson 5

ORION'S INTERVIEW:

Orion was actually involved in 2 fires. One occurred when he was at school, in the 8th grade at Concow School. The second happened the following year very near to his home. He and his family had to be alert all night and be prepared to evacuate.

Q=Interviewer

A=Orion's response

Q How did you know that your school was in danger?

A One of the kids in my class looked out the window during class. He spotted smoke and told the teacher. The teacher went outside to check. It was about 200 yards away. The teacher took us outside the building and we were in the buses in five minutes. The kids were pretty good; we even got ice cream as a reward for moving so fast.

Q Had you been trained at school as to how to evacuate?

A We had fire drills where we went to the basketball courts, and we had a couple where we had to go to the bus. There was no panic.

Q Did anyone cry or get overly excited?

A One of my friends had a panic attack. He had a hard time breathing, but no tears. He stayed with the teacher.

Q Where did the bus go?

A It took us to Spring Valley School, about 4 ½ miles from our school.

Q What did you do there?

A We waited. Then we got signed out by our parents. The Red Cross brought us peaches.

Q Was your little brother at that elementary school?

A Yes, that's his school. I waited there with him and we hung out together until my Mom came to sign us out.

Q How long was it before you returned to Concow School?

A Two or three weeks...There was no school until then because they had to fix the power lines and the telephone. It would take too long to go to school in Oroville.

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Orion's Interview
(pg.2)

Q One year later you were in a 2nd fire. Where were you?

A I was at home. Our house wasn't in immediate danger, but we could see the orange glow at night. We didn't know if we had to evacuate.

Q Was there a lot of smoke?

A Yes. And the helicopters flew to Concow Lake to fill up with water. They filled their buckets and we could see some water leaking out. When they flew over us, we could feel the water like raindrops.

Q I hear you were written up in the newspaper. Why?

A I was recounting the fire to a reporter. Governor Grey Davis declared 5/13/01 as "National Wildfire Awareness Week." This was the same year as our school fire. They chose me because the principal knew I wouldn't exaggerate.

Q Were you ever in the paper again?

A I was on TV for replanting trees in a burned area next to Concow Pool. My friend Heather was helping, too. There were about 20 kids from my school helping. It was our PE class giving back to the community.

Q Do you have any advice for young people who might be in a fire?

A Yes! KEEP YOUR COOL! STAY COLLECTED! It doesn't do anyone any good to lose your cool. When you have responsibility for another person, you go to another level. You grow up quick. Your decisions affect someone else.

TEACHER: "What do you think of the way these 3 young people handled themselves during the fires? What reaction did you have to these students' stories?"

Teacher: ask questions you believe would get the students to relate to the three young people in the interviews.