

Inskeep

quickly when they come down.”

After helping the group get all settled, Langeliers returned to the group’s rental home to fix dinner. Inskeep and two other youth workers stayed with the group.

Piecing together what happened from youth on the trip, Langeliers said the group had walked out onto the sandbar. The students were boxed in on purpose by the staff. A short time later, one of the students stepped onto what she called a shelf.

“More kids began stepping off and the more movement there was, the more the shelf began to give way from under their feet,” she said. “Some of the kids were able to self-correct and get to safety, but four were struggling.

As the shelf gave way, the students began to be pulled under the water by a strong undertow. Inskeep ran to the water, followed closely by Shaun Martin, a youth volunteer. The men began to work to get the students to safety.

“Shaun was able to get two of the kids on the sand right away. He and Andy went back for the other students.”

As the rescue efforts intensified, the students began helping one another, some pulling others back farther from the deep water and others keeping them from going back in the water to help, Langeliers said. Four students ran to call 911.

“Help could not be deployed fast enough,” she said. “The area was so large and even screaming was not helping. No one could hear them.”

It was then that a student was able to get the attention of a windsurfer. The man, who Langeliers said was named Talon Jesson, first made his way to Inskeep who told him to move on to another student who was going under water quickly. The windsurfer was able to scoop the student up out of the water. A jet skier then flagged down a boat that helped get the student to safety.

“Andy was within reach to get to safety, but he tried to save Brandan. “He was the most amazing man and I am so fortunate to have known him.”

Amber Langeliers, Youth sponsor

Martin, who has participated in triathlons, began swimming toward 11-year-old Brandan Raley. With the undertow working against him, he was able to reach Brandan, putting him on his back with the boy’s arms wrapped around his neck. He then began working against the current to get the boy to safety, according to Jim Raley, Brandan’s father.

With the water rushing over his face and the undertow pulling him beneath the surface of the water, Martin took the youth and placed him on his back to try and keep him above the water and out of the undertow. In doing so, he noticed Brandan was no longer breathing, almost immediately the boy’s body went limp.

“Shaun began to go underwater himself and then thrust Brandan up into the air, hoping the force would help him to begin to breathe,” Jim said. “Shaun was drowning and starting to lose consciousness. He held onto Brandan as long as he could.”

“He let go of Brandan involuntarily because he was drowning himself,” Kris Raley, Brandan’s mother said. “We know he did the best he could.”

Shortly before 7 p.m., Drew Goode, a youth sponsor with the group, called 911 reporting five to six individuals in distress off the sandbar. When Hood County Sheriff’s deputies arrived, two of the group were unaccounted for, Inskeep and Brandan.

“They were caught in

the current so quickly and it was trying to drag them down like a weight,” said Langeliers, who arrived back at the area shortly after 7 p.m.

“My daughter called me and I rushed to the beach,” she said.

Another youth sponsor, Jemima Dougherty, stayed back at the rental home to be ready for the students to return.

When Langeliers arrived at the beach, she and youth sponsor Trish Martin collected the students and moved them to a dry area on the sand. She then made her way to Martin who was coming out of the water.

“He was in shock. I looked at Shaun and it was just as if he had a look of hopelessness. I just knew at that moment it was Andy and Brandan,” she said. “I knew it was going to be a recovery at that point. Too much time had passed.”

She then began searching for people to help locate the missing members of their group. She reached out to boaters, kite surfers and jet skiers, but they found nothing.

As students waited for answers, strangers began to come over and prayed with them and to offer them comfort. To just sit with them silently as they wept, Langeliers shared.

“People came out of nowhere and were praying and helping the kids. The sheriff’s office and rescue workers were praying with us,” she said. “Two teens from the area named Faith and Chad ran to get help and then helped the kids. All

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of (the students) were so calm and so strong. They rose to the occasion and God showed up.”

“Every single person played their part perfectly to the absolute best of their ability,” Goode said. “And what can only be God’s work, everyone was placed where they could play to their strengths.”

Approximately 45 minutes after the initial 911 call, an individual on the Washington side of the Columbia River reported someone appeared to be floating near the mouth of the White Salmon River. Brandan’s body was pulled from the water and life-saving efforts were administered. He was pronounced dead at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, according to the Hood River County Sheriff’s Office.

Inskeep’s body was recovered at approximately 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 6, according to the Skamania County Sheriff’s Office. Boaters located his body near milepost 54 on Highway 14, more than nine miles from where he had gone into the water.

In the days that followed the tragic accident, the Ridgefield church, youth and Inskeep and Brandan’s family and friends have not just mourned their loss, they have celebrated their lives. Shortly after returning home, a student from the church’s youth group shared John 15:13 on the group’s Facebook page. It reads, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for a friend.”

“Andy was within reach to get to safety, but he tried to save Brandan,” Langeliers said. “He was the most amazing man and I am so fortunate to have known him.”

That Inskeep would put others’ lives before his own, does not surprise Brandan’s parents.

“(Brandan) and Andy were so similar. They both worked to connect to people and they did it as a ministry,” Jim said. “They both lived to make others’ lives better.”

“My son was a terrific kid. He was empathetic and he connected with family, church and strangers. If he met you, within two hours you were his buddy.”

Inskeep’s wife, former Wabash resident Maria (Swinger), said her husband was a man who made people feel like they were important.

“Andy loved people and he loved building relationships. He would do whatever was needed to connect with people,” she said. “He would learn card games, take up an interest in different sports just to be able to connect with his students and others.”

“Relationships mattered to him. People mattered to Andy.

“(Brandan) had a good heart,” Kris Raley said. “He was fun loving, compassionate. He was all in and generous with his love.

“He knew who Jesus was and accepted Jesus when he was five years old. He lived his life for Jesus. We are very proud of who he is. We were in no way ready for this, but we have hope and know that he was rescued from those waters and is with Jesus.”

Brandan was the middle child of his family, having a younger sister and older brother.

“He never had a bad day,” his mother said. “He did great in school and was wonderful with his little sister. He loved foxes and would write her stories about foxes and then read them to her.”

Brandan would have celebrated his 12th birthday on Aug. 11

Inskeep’s wife, Maria, is at peace with what has happened. Andy died doing what he loved most, teaching teens about Jesus and saving them, spiritually and physically, she shared.

“If I had to experience this again, just so one more person could know the Kingdom of Heaven I would,” she said the day following her husband’s death. “It’s what he would want.”

A true friend, man of God and spiritual leader, Inskeep lived his life to lead students to a relationship with Jesus, one where they would experience the love, grace and mercies of Christ, his wife says.

“He died demonstrating first-hand what it means to lay one’s life down for a friend,” she said. “Inskeep’s legacy will be that he lived like Christ until the very end.”

A memorial service for Inskeep will take place Aug. 23 at 2:30 p.m. at the Wabash Friends Church, Wabash. His family asks that preferred memorials be given to the Andrew J. Inskeep Memorial Scholarship fund through Ridgefield Church of the Nazarene, 747 Pioneer St, Ridgefield, Wash. 98642, or at <https://pushpay.com/g/ridgenaz?src=hpp>.

A Celebration of Life for Brandan took place Saturday, Sat., Aug. 15, at Woodland Christian Church, Woodland, Wash. A fund has been set up to help the family financially. Donations can be sent in the family’s name to Woodland Christian Church, or through a Go-Fund Me page at <https://gf.me/u/ynjry2>.

14 school board seats open in November election

By Alan Miller

Fourteen seats on the boards of Grant County’s five public school systems will be on the November 3 general election ballot, and people who would like to fill one of those seats have until noon Friday, Aug. 21, to file their candidacy.

Candidate forms are available in the election office in the basement of the Grant County Courthouse. Newly elected school board members will take office on Jan. 1, 2021, and serve four-year terms.

When the courthouse closed Monday afternoon, at least one candidate had filed for 11 of the 14 board seats in the Eastbrook, Madison-Grant, Marion, Mississinewa and Oak Hill school districts. There are no candidates yet for the Madison-Grant District 1 seat nor for the Oak Hill District 3 and District 5 seats.

To date, there is one contested race in the five school systems. Corey Sizelove is challenging incumbent board member Mary Jo Brunt for the Madison-Grant District 5 seat.

One incumbent, Aaron Vermilion, who has served on the Marion school board for 12 years, chose not to seek a fourth term. Brooke Thomas has filed for his District 2 seat.

“It has been a long 12 years, and it is time for someone new to take over,” Vermilion said. “I am happy people want to jump in and do the work, and it is a ton of of work.”

Mary Prows, who filed for the District 3 seat on the Marion school board, was just appointed to the board on August 4, succeeding Chuck Griffin, who resigned.

Here is a list of candidates as of Monday, August 17:

Eastbrook
District 4 Patrick Pinkerton

District 5 (at-large) Daniel Spencer

Madison-Grant
District 1
District 5 Corey Sizelove and Mary Jo Brunt

District 6 Amanda Kelich

Marion
District 2 Brooke Thomas
District 3 Mary Prows
District 4 (at-large) Todd Nicholson

Mississinewa
District 1
Wayne “Spike” Gaskin
District 4 (at-large) (2)
William “Chris” Cunningham

Terry Fratus

Oak Hill
District 2
Teresa Shafer
District 3
District 5



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