

Tu-Kway-ya's Story

By Susan A. Curo



In 2006 we started the first Good News Club on a California Indian reservation. We had anywhere from 3 kids at my house to 17 along with some of the parents, most who have never been churched or had ever heard the gospel. Many of our reservation children have been through some very traumatic episodes and I would like to share a story of one little boy name Tu-Kway-ya .

He was four years old when his father was shot. His father's cousin showed up at their house on drugs with a rifle. The gunman walked all around the house and began shooting out every window. Tu-kway-ya's father picked him up and ran to the bedroom closet and told him to lie on the floor and not to get up or leave the closet area. Tu-kway-ya's daddy then ran back into the living room and called 911 and told the dispatcher what was happening.

Portions of the 911 tapes revealed that as the gunman continued shooting, he shot through a large plate glass window. The young father laid the phone receiver down and tried to stop his cousin from entering the house. He was then shot in the chest and stomach and fell to the ground. The gunman proceeded to beat in the face of Tu-kway-ya's daddy with the butt of the rifle. Believing he had killed the young father, the gunman then walked out of the house and headed 25 feet away toward Tu-kway-ya's grandfather's house. The grandfather heard the sounds of gunfire and as he hurried out to see what was happening, the gunman met him and shot him in the stomach.

As the sirens of the police cars became louder and louder, the gunman ran to the back of Tu-kway-ya's house. Tu-kway-ya's daddy, still alive, made his way to his little boy. As he picked up Tu-kway-ya, he made sure his young son faced outward. With Tu-Kway-ya's back against his daddy's bleeding chest, he tried to protect him from the sight of the blood coming from his face and bullet wounds. As a policeman headed toward the young father and his son, Ta-kway-ya's daddy threw him to safety into the officer's arms. Tu-kway-ya's daddy fell back, weak from blood loss. He landed on a small couch on their porch.

The policeman held Te-kway-ya close and ran with him toward the other officers. The police surrounded the house; the gunman was shot in the hand and taken into custody. Tu-kway-ya's daddy died at the hospital, his grandfather was in a coma for four months, and then also died.

Once Tu-kway-ya was home with his mother, she bathed him to get him ready for bed. Washing his hair she found a four-inch long wound where one of the flying bullets made its mark on her little boys head. Instead of feeling anger for their family's loss, she was so thankful that God had protected her son.

Five years later, after our first Good News Clubs started, Tu-kway-ya rode home with his mother. As they talked about the bible lesson, Tu-kway-ya asked his mom to pull off the dirt road so that he could ask Jesus into his heart. I often wonder if Ty-kway-ya's daddy and his cousin would have been able to attend a Good News Club, how their lives might have turned out differently. We can't change the past but we can have a part in changing the future. Teaching our native children about Christ is the only answer. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes unto the Father but by me." Years after the incident, Tu-kway-ya still journeys through a healing process. How do you put a band-aid on a broken heart? I would venture to say that every reservation has little boys and girls with stories like Tu-kway-ya's. Remember if you are native you are 3 times more likely to be murdered. You can have a part in changing that by supporting tribal children's ministry.