

‘2 More Seconds’: Family Says Boy Rescued by Teen Lifeguard Survived by a Miracle

When seconds separated life from tragedy, one teenage lifeguard's courage changed the course of two families forever.

What began as a summer vacation at a California beach nearly ended in heartbreak when 10-year-old Nathaniel Rai was pulled beneath the surf by powerful waves. Instead, the terrifying ordeal became a story of extraordinary heroism, gratitude and an unexpected friendship that continues to grow long after the rescue.

According to Fox News, Nathaniel, who was visiting Seabright Beach in Santa Cruz with his family, never intended to venture into deep water. He recalled that a sudden wave knocked him off his feet, leaving him struggling to stay above the surface.

“I started screaming for help. I think I saw the lifeguard and then passed out,” Nathaniel told Fox News.

That lifeguard was 16-year-old California State Lifeguard Ryder Williams.

Fox News reported that Williams immediately entered the dangerous surf, battling strong rip currents and heavy waves to reach the unconscious boy. Despite Nathaniel's limp body becoming increasingly difficult to maneuver through the water, the teenage lifeguard maintained his grip until both reached shore safely.

Nathaniel later regained consciousness and began coughing up sand as emergency responders evaluated him. Doctors also

warned his family about the possibility of secondary drowning, a potentially life-threatening condition that can develop after a near-drowning incident, Fox News reported.

For Nathaniel's father, Sumit Rai, the rescue was nothing short of miraculous.



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According to Fox News, Rai believes his son was only moments away from being carried beyond the point where rescuers could have reached him.

"Two more seconds in the water... he would be so far out, you can't see him, let alone rescue or retrieve him," Rai told Fox News.

The dramatic rescue, captured on video and viewed by millions online, has drawn national attention—not only because of Williams' bravery but because of what happened afterward.

Rather than simply expressing thanks and moving on, the Rai and Williams families formed a close bond that continues today. Fox News reported that the two families now communicate almost daily, with Rai describing the Williams family as part of their "extended family."

They are already planning future visits together, including attending a UFC event after discovering their shared love of mixed martial arts.

The families also uncovered another meaningful connection. Fox News reported that Williams hopes to become a firefighter like his father, Shane Williams, while Rai leads Cancer Check Labs, an organization that works to detect occupational cancers among firefighters. Nathaniel himself has participated in that mission through conferences and educational events.

The White House has also taken notice of Williams' actions. According to Fox News, officials have contacted both families as the Trump administration considers formally recognizing the teenage lifeguard for his courage. Rai enthusiastically supported the idea, telling Fox News he is "1 billion percent behind it."

In a culture often dominated by discouraging headlines, stories like this serve as a reminder that ordinary people can display extraordinary courage when others need it most. One teenager chose to run toward danger instead of away from it, and because of that decision, a young boy was given another chance at life—and two families gained a lifelong friendship born from an unforgettable act of selfless sacrifice.

Abby Trivett is a writer and editor for Charisma Media and has a passion for sharing the gospel through the written word. She holds two degrees from Regent University, a B.A. in Communication with a concentration in Journalism and a Master of Arts in Journalism. She is the author of the newly released book, *The Power of Suddenly: Discover How God Can Change Everything in a Moment*. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.