

## **The Lessons of Kia Kima** **by Allen Carter**

The summer of 1963 changed my life forever. The first time I attended Kia Kima was as an 11 year old Boy Scout for the last week of June and first week of July. I was bunked at the Eagle's Nest with my Patrol Leader Pete Coleman. We were a group of 11 and 12 year boys that were part of a new patrol on their first summer camp adventure. Troop 97 was an institution at Kia Kima, attending almost every other year. I was carrying my father's Navy sea bag full of everything I would need to survive the outback of Arkansas.

My first lesson was the Swimming Test. I did not know how to swim and still wanted to try. My effort failed and I was pulled out of the Spring River by Mark Hillis. He asked the question, "Do you know how to swim?" I answered NO. His response, "No problem, because you are going learn and I will be the one to teach you." During the next two weeks Mark worked with me to overcome my fear of having my face in the water. His method was to have you sit on dry land at a table with a dish pan full of water and practice holding your breath and turning your head. His time and efforts paid off because two years later, I had Swimming and Life Saving Merit Badges, Scout Life Guard, Mile Swim, and rescued a young man caught in the rapids of the Eleven Point River. I have used Mark's method over the last 40 years countless times to help young people learn to love and respect the water.

Second lesson, First Aid—what is it? I remember the class like it was yesterday. "First Aid is the immediate and temporary care given to the victim of an accident or sudden illness until the services of a medical professional can be obtained." Teams of Scouts would practice dressing wounds, splinting arms and legs, rescue breathing, burn treatment and the most important, how to care for blisters and bug bites. Since 1983 I have trained and evaluated Airport Crash Fire Rescue teams around the world.

Third lesson, Fire Building. Kia Kima in the Summer time was cursed with thunderstorms. The staff would take you out after the rain stopped and teach you how to build a fire with everything wet using a flint and steel kit. Years later at a Management Team Building Training in Northern Utah, my team of 4 (including another Eagle Scout) was the only group out of ten teams to start a fire in the snow covered mountains using only a flint and steel kit. We were able to cook our food, prepare hot drinks, and stay warm.

The last lesson, Leadership. Kia Kima provided a training ground for young men to learn how to lead people. Hiking the long trails, the early morning canoe trips down a foggy river, teaching new Scouts how to tie knots, becoming a Patrol Leader, and taking on responsibility. The planning for camping trips, hikes to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, going to Jamborees, cooking on open fires, and going to Philmont taught you leadership skills that you used daily for the rest of your life.

40 plus years later after my first encounter with Kia Kima, I have traveled and conducted business in 57 different countries and flown over 3 million miles. I have used the "Lessons of Kia Kima" in my personal and business life as guiding principles. My brother and I are both Eagle Scouts as well as my two sons. There is no greater classroom than that wooded camp on the Spring River in Hardy, Arkansas that teaches young people to become productive adults.

Allen Carter  
Troop 97  
Broadway Baptist Church  
Memphis, Tennessee

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