

Courage in a Ditch

On a summer morning as he was fixing his breakfast, Ray Blankenship looked out his window to see a young girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Ohio home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath the road and then emptied into the main culvert.

Blankenship dashed from his home and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the flailing child. Finally, he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. When he surfaced, he was able to grab the girl's arm.

The two tumbled end over end and then, within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Blankenship's free hand felt something protrude from the bank. He clung to it desperately, the tremendous force of the water trying to tear him and the child away.

By the time fire department rescuers arrived, Blankenship amazingly had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock. In that heroic moment, Ray Blankenship was at even greater risk than most people knew, since he could not swim.

Today, do you face something of which you are afraid? Let your courage respond to the needs that you see, not the fear that you may feel.

--Beecher Hunter