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To whom it may concern,

On the date of September 18, 2020 a call for service came out for Bubba Gump's restaurant at John's Pass for a gas leak. While attempting to resolve the issue at Bubba Gump's, bystanders began to notify the staff on Truck 25 that a woman and her child were in a kayak and needed help. T25 then attached themselves to the water rescue leaving one member behind to turn the gas off to the original structure. The officer of the day instructed the firefighter to doff his air pack and turn out gear, put the rescue board in service and make contact with the victims. This was accomplished in less than one minute.

During this time a jet ski had made contact with the kayak who was now stuck in between the bridge and the wooden structure next to it. The jet ski was trying to pull the kayak with a rope but was unsuccessful due to the current. The jet ski tried one more time and as it accelerated the front of the kayak was submerged causing the entire kayak to be overtaken with water. As this was happening the firefighter from T25 made it to the victims just as they were falling out of the kayak. The firefighter immediately got off of the rescue board, caught the young child and keep him above the surface with one arm while securing the rescue tube around the mother with the other. Luckily both victims were wearing PFD's. As the firefighter, mother and child floated through the pass, they were picked up by a good Samaritan vessel.

The current definitely played a big role in the way this call for service came to be. I can honestly say that if T25 were responding from station and not be at the right place at the right time, this call could have and probably would have ended differently. I can say that Covid has increased the amount of people that have been coming to the beach in general let alone Madeira Beach. John's Pass has now taken over the number one originating location for water rescues. With the sand being built up on the North jetty it is causing the current to move more rapidly than it has in the past due to a narrower pass still moving the same amount of water. Without a resolution to this problem I can say that we are on borrowed time before something more serious happens.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the information below. Thanks and stay safe!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Clint Belk".

Clint Belk  
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