It was a hot summer day in late August and my friends, and I decided to go swimming at a hidden lake in Leavenworth, WA. We were the immature 15-year-olds that you would expect at the time, and we were having a great time, messing around in knee deep water. After enjoying our take near the bank, we decided to swim across the small, chilly, lake. Half the group decided to hop right in and start swimming, leaving myself and the other half waiting hesitantly to follow. I was just about to dive off the large, fallen, tree to start making my way to the other side when I noticed that my friend started yelling from the middle that Matthew was struggling to swim. Matthew is my best friend that I would lay down my life for. We have known each other since sixth grade and have been inseparable since. He is the nicest human I know and is unanimously liked by his peers. He is kind, caring, empathetic, and welcoming to any and everyone. The world needs more people like Matthew. So, when I saw Matthew’s body starting to go into shock from the cold water, I noticed that he never gained control of his breathing from his initial dip. After spotting my best friend frantically struggling in the water, I could tell he was struggling to stay afloat. Under pressure and stress, my fight or flight instincts kicked in and I knew I had to act fast to save him. Being the problem solver that I am, and having the ability to act quickly but calmly, I dove in with no hesitation to get to him as fast as possible.

Remembering my knowledge of fluids and the general basics of water safety, I quickly swam over, feeling the chilled water flow past my body as I made my way to my friend. Once I reached Matthew, I instructed him to calm down and not to panic. I knew that panicking and flailing around would only make it harder for him to stay afloat, since Matthew would be more focused on trying to stay above water rather than calming down. I also knew, from my years of being in and around water my whole life, that the human body is naturally buoyant in water, so I encouraged him to lie on his back and try to keep his body relaxed. I then positioned myself behind him and placed my arm through his arms and across his chest, ensuring that his head was above the water. Using my own body weight and swimming with my free arm and legs, I gently started making my way to the bank that we were trying to reach. While making way, I allowed him to take deep breaths and regain his composure. I knew that by doing this, I was helping to displace the water around our bodies, reducing the amount of pressure pushing him down. I am thankful for my knowledge about water and water safety from my own personal experience and interest, mainly taught to me from my parents, and I think my prior knowledge helped me be a crucial factor in this situation.

With a little bit of effort and plenty of energy, I was able to slowly guide him towards the shallow end of the lake where he could touch the bottom and stand on his own. I kept reassuring him that he was safe and that myself along with my friends that had already made it were there to help him. After what felt like hours, my best friends and I were able to make it back to shore safely, thanks to my quick thinking and knowledge of how fluids work. Although we were safe on land and regaining our composure, we had another challenge to face. We were on the other side of the lake with no clear path around, no shoes, and after the previous events, going back in the water did not seem like an option.

With my mind racing and thoughts flowing through my head, we decided to try and make our way around the bank of the lake through the thick brush. With my understanding of fluids, I knew that objects can take the path of least resistance and fit through openings that were big enough for us to crawl through. We slowly started making our way through the thick brush and fallen trees. With no shoes or shirts, this task was not easy, with the constant scratching and poking of the surrounding plants against our skin. Luckily, we were able to weave our way through small openings and piece together a path for us to go through. Although the idea seemed impossible and unpleasant, it was a better and safer alternative to going back into the chilling water. With our bodies already cold and weak, knowing that going back into the water would suck the body heat right out of us, we were content with our decision. After ducking and hurdling many trees, shrubs and branches, we finally made our way back to where we started and felt a collective feeling of relief and safety. After calming down and soaking in what had just happened, we grabbed our towels, put the rest of our clothing on, started to get warmed up and made our way to the car.

In conclusion, this experience showed me just how important it is to understand our surroundings and the properties of fluids, especially when it comes to water safety. By understanding how water affects the human body, whether it is how forces exerted by our bodies on water that helps us swim, or how heat dissipation can greatly affect our body temperature, I was able to keep my friends and I safe and prevent a potentially dangerous situation from becoming much worse. I was also able to effectively save my best friend’s life and since then, we have only grown closer over the years.