

To Whom It may Concern,

My name is Linda Nagai. I am 70 years old and currently work as the Lunch Lady at Yucaipa Christian Preschool.

On April 24, 2024, Mr. Jonathon Barajas-Nava set a fire at our preschool at the door leading to the Social Hall which is part of the kitchen area to our church.

I work in the kitchen daily preparing food for the children there. I frequently worry (and my co-workers are aware) that I might have left the oven or the stove on. I would never be able to live with myself if something happened and anyone got hurt. I go home and worry so much at times that I have to go back to the school no matter what time of the day or night it is and check that everything is off rather than take a chance that the children could get hurt or the church burn down. In all the years I have worked there, it has not ever been left on, but it is an ongoing fear of mine.

On the day in question, I left to go home. Approximately 40 minutes after I left, I began to worry about that very thing. I turned around to go back and check. As I approached the school, I saw several fire trucks and sheriff vehicles there. They were roping the area off and I panicked and was terrified that I could have had my worst fear realized.

I parked and ran inside the school office area and was trying to get to the kitchen and was told I couldn't because someone had set fire outside the door leading to the social hall/kitchen area and I was told I couldn't enter the area. I was frozen with fear and had to sit down because I was so panicked I was ready to faint at any moment.

I was desperate to find the children and make sure they were alright and at the same time gathering composure and thanking God it wasn't caused by me but instead, it was DELIBERATE act of violence that was aimed at harming innocent children. Everyone that day was harmed in many different ways, and it will take me, because of past trauma in my life, a very long time to heal from this. The fact that Mr. Barajas-Nava intentionally set fire to a school that he knew was occupied by children is frightening. He could have easily killed over 40+ children that day. To know that he then left and set other businesses and

vehicles on fire after this incident, shows what a dangerous person this man is to society.

I photograph the stove now every day before I go home so I can see in the photo that it is off, because I will never ever forget what happened that day. It was so traumatic for me that I, at first thought, was going to resign because I couldn't get past it. And the memories I have of the emergency vehicles there, thinking I could have been responsible haunts me to this day.

I'm hoping for justice in this matter, and that Mr. Barajas-Nava gets sentenced to the maximum possible sentence.

Sincerely,

Linda Nagai  
YCPS Staff Member