

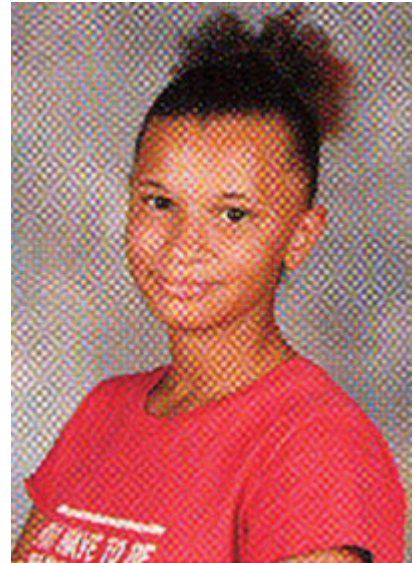
Students cope with death of friend, classmate

Barstow High School teen shot and killed in Victorville
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This is an updated version of a story posted earlier on Monday.
BARSTOW — According to her friends, Myela Ransom had attitude.

The 15-year-old Barstow High School sophomore was shot and killed inside a car in Victorville on Sunday, when multiple shots came from another car, according to reports. Ransom was taken to Victor Valley Community Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. Another person suffered minor cuts from broken glass.

Classmates and neighbors remember Ransom as an outgoing, talkative, well-liked young woman who wasn't afraid to speak her mind and frequently did.



"She touched everybody. Even if you weren't one of best friends, she touched you in such a way that you'd remember her," said Estrella Mitchell, 16, a friend of Ransom's.

Mitchell said that Ransom's friends were shocked when they heard she had been shot.

"Is my sister, is my best friend really gone?" she said.

Mitchell and Ransom became fast friends after meeting in class and spent as much time as possible together.

"Me and Myela, we we're always side by side. I sat next to her in my classes, now there's just an empty chair there," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said that she was amazed by her friend's outgoing nature and fearlessness of dancing or singing in public. On a recent Halloween, when Mitchell, Ransom and friends went trick-or-treating, they were met with hostility at one doorstep by an adult who didn't want to give older kids any candy and demanded to see the group put on a show.

"We were dancing, doing flips in the street," Mitchell said. "Myela did a full split right there in the street. The lady said 'wow' and gave us a whole bunch of candy."

Ransom's friends described her as funny, loud and crazy. She loved Minnie Mouse and plastered the Disney character's image all over her clothing and backpack. Her friends said she was not shy, never stopped talking, and always had a smile on her face.

"I couldn't get her off the phone," said Akeem Maloy, 15. "She'd call you just hear you breath, and we'd talk about nothing."

Maloy said that although some people were initially put off by his friend's loud, outgoing personality, most people grew to like her.

"If you were mad or sad, she'd make you happy," he said. "She was the type of person who if she had something to say, she would just say it."

Ann Gardner, one of Ransom's teacher's, said that she liked Ransom's personality.

"She wasn't phony. She was real and you came to appreciate that," Gardner said.

Gardner said that although Ransom was not an academic standout, since becoming a sophomore Ransom began improving daily.

"I could see a maturing take place," Gardner said. "She had gotten over that freshman part of life and was developing into a fine young woman."

Barstow High School Principal Claire Ellis said that Ransom began at BHS as a first-year student, moved, but came back to BHS for her sophomore year.

She said that since hearing the news, students, faculty and staff were just beginning to cope with the loss of their friend and classmate. Psychologists and counselors were on the campus to help students adjust to the news, Ellis said.

"This is a tragedy. These events affect student, teachers, all of us, for ever and for always. It's just tragic," she said.

Although she was a Barstow resident, Ransom's mother, Angie Bryce, said that her daughter was in Victorville for the weekend visiting her aunt. Bryce thinks that Ransom and Jones went to a movie with two males and had stopped at the gas station on the way back to Jones' home.

Bryce said Jones may have pulled out of the gas station at the same time as another vehicle, and that the shot that hit her daughter came from the driver's side window and may have been intended for Jones.

According to neighbors, the Jones house has been shot at in the past.

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information is urged to contact Detective Mark Pederson or Sgt. Tony De Cecio at (909) 387-3589. Those who wish to remain anonymous can contact WE-TIP at 1-800-78-CRIME.

Daily Press reporter Rachel Byrd contributed to this report.

School sends in counselors to help students cope with tragedy

Dave Wishnewsky saw a wide range of emotions on Monday helping groups of traumatized students cope with the sudden loss of a classmate.

Wishnewsky, a grief and anger management counselor who works in the Barstow schools, was sent to Barstow High School on Monday morning shortly after students began to find out that their classmate, Myela Ransom, had been killed in a vehicle shooting on Sunday.

He said that most at the school were shocked by the news of Ransom's death and conversations about the topic filled the hallways.

"We had a little bit of everything. Some students came in extremely sad and crying, others faced it with laughter or anger," he said.

In his nine years working for the school district, he's seen several tragedies affect students and said that it can take a long time for them to come to terms with what happened. He said that students and teachers who seek counseling and allow themselves to grieve tend to adjust better to the loss of someone important to them.

“Every kid is different. It depends on whether a kid seeks guidance or whether anger and grief prevent them from coping,” he said.

Wishnewsy said that it’s not just the close friends or relatives of the victim who are affected. Given the tight-knit nature of high school, it affects everyone.

LaToya Henry, 16, was a classmate of Ransom’s and didn’t consider her a close friend. She said she thinks that things will be different in the future, but that Ransom’s death hasn’t sunk in yet.

“It don’t even seem like she’s gone,” Henry said. “It just feels like she’s absent, even though she’ll be absent for good.”

Barstow High School Principal Claire Ellis said that in times of tragedy students draw on each others strength by sharing stories and memories about those they have lost. She said that even students who didn’t know, or barely knew, the victim are saddened by the loss.

“To certain degree, it affects the whole school. Especially for teenagers who don’t have a sense of mortality, it’s a sobering thought,” she said.