

Friday, March 17, 2006

## Two Hinkley teens killed in crash

By HOWARD DECKER Staff Writer

HINKLEY -- A teenage brother and sister died in a car crash around 8:30 p.m. Wednesday night in a collision with a truck.

Anita Felix, 18, attempted to cross Highway 58 while traveling northbound on Mountain View Road when the vehicle was struck by an 18-wheeler traveling eastbound, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's office.

The girl and her brother, Ruben, 14, were pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics, the Sheriff's Department said.

Another passenger in the Honda Civic, Raymond Ashley, was airlifted by helicopter to Loma Linda University Hospital. According to the Felix siblings' father, Ruben Felix, Ashley is a Hinkley School student and was a friend of the younger Ruben.

No information on his condition was immediately available.

### Anita Felix and Ruben Felix

The elder Ruben Felix said his wife, Maria, dropped the younger Ruben off at Hinkley School, where an event was being held. The daughter, Anita, volunteered to pick her younger brother up at the school after the event and bring him home, he said.

Anita, a senior at Barstow High School was excited about graduating this year and was looking forward to taking training so she could work in the medical field, her father said.

"She was a good student," he said, "and was ready for graduation."

The younger Ruben was also a good student, his father said, noting that the boy loved riding his bicycle in the rural area where the family resides. A student at Hinkley School, he was looking forward to going to Barstow High School next year, the father said.

At Hinkley School, teachers and others met the students as they arrived at school in the morning, said Principal Dennis "Dennie" Hirsch. He said he learned of the tragedy before classes started and arranged for staff members to meet the children when the buses arrived at 8:30 a.m.

Some of the children did not know of the accident when they arrived at the school, but many did, he said.

"The word spread quickly," he said.

School district psychologist Spence O'Neal was on hand as well, as staff members were available to any student who wanted to talk about the tragedy.

The principal said he went to all four of the school's classrooms to talk to the students, starting with Ruben Felix's home room.

"Some parents stayed with us after school started to help out," he said.

The staff tried to keep the children occupied. Some students opted to walk around the football field and staff members and other adults kept them company and discussed issues with those students who wanted to talk. A few students had their parents come to the school and take them home, Hirsch said.

Some of the students who had gone home came back after a call from the school, he said. The reason the school authorities called the students that had gone home is they felt the students

would be better off being with their schoolmates and receiving input from teachers and others about their feelings concerning the tragedy.

An assembly had been planned for this morning, he said, and that will be an opportunity to speak to the entire student body about the tragedy and any grief issues some students may have and to "say some words for Ruben."

Later, Hirsch said, there will probably be one or more fundraisers for the families of the two boys.

Dr. Claire Ellis, principal of Barstow High School, said the school officials did not tell the students who had not heard of the tragedy about it at first. Instead, she and other staff members gave out information to teachers and others how to talk to the students about the situation and any feelings of grief they might have.

District Psychologist Tory Busco was on hand to help the schools counselors, teachers and others help the students in dealing with the students' feelings and grief.

"We try to help the students in a time like this however we can," Ellis said.

Some parents came to the school and took their children home, she said.

In addition to their parents, Ruben and Maria Felix, the two are survived by two sisters, Ancelina, 17, and Adriana, 10. Plans for memorial services were incomplete as of late Thursday.