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'Shock, horror, indignation': Classmates struggling to find answers

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Girls shed tears and hugged one another for comfort. Boys were more distant in their grief. Some wore bandages on their fists, reminders of the rage they vented when they learned the news.

"There are strong feelings of revenge and violence," said Betty Phillips, coordinator of student intervention services for Austin Independent School District.

"We have a lot of kids here who are very, very hurt and very upset and all their problems are coming to the forefront. Their feelings are what you would expect. There is just shock, horror, indignation."

Said Amy Hattenhausen, a senior and editor of the Lanier school newspaper: "There is anger that there is a person or people out there who may never get caught, may never have to pay." There is indignation, she said, that the killer "took these lives, and they had so much ahead of them."

Hattenhausen was one of at least a dozen student leaders who spoke to the press in the school's main office. Each had volunteered, at the request of Lanier Principal Paul Turner, to express their feelings.

The victims, all of them active in Future Farmers of America, were described as good students and leaders, popular

with classmates. "They were all vivacious, full of life, enthusiastic kids," said Turner. "They were just top kids."

At Burnet Middle School, Principal James Wilson said counselors stood ready to talk with any students showing signs of being particularly troubled by the death of Ayers, a popular eighth grader.

Facilities from both schools met Thursday to support one another and to prepare for the students on Monday.

"I'd like to commend the faculty for just really pulling together, for rising to the occasion," said Phillips, who counseled students in crisis situations. "Look around. There is no hysteria, no weeping

with classmates. "They were all vivacious, full of life, enthusiastic kids," said Turner. "They were just top kids."

Students seemed to find some comfort in being together. A group of about 60 Lanier teens again visited the yogurt shop at lunch. "We just came to take the pressure off," said Gentry Pate, a senior.

Andy Hadden, Midwest Baptist Church youth minister, spent the week-end with several grieving people and was at Lanier on Monday. "I've been real frustrated all morning. I wish there was a Band-Aid I could put on their pain."

Parents, he said, are afraid for their own children, and children are frustrated and angry at the senselessness of the crime. "The one man has put the whole

Northwest Austin community in the grips of fear. He will cut these same where. He could be sitting across the crowd from this school, and we wouldn't know it," Bearden said.

Families of the victims on Monday asked that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to two funds. One fund will benefit Lanier's FFA chapter. Donations should be addressed to: The Lanier FFA Chapter Memorial, c/o NCHS, P.O. Box 381108, Austin 78738. The Hattenhausen family has established this memorial. The Jennifer and Sarah Hattenhausen FFA Scholarship Fund, c/o Team Bank, P.O. Box 9708, Austin 78768.



Amy Ayers Jennifer Hattenhausen Sarah Hattenhausen Eliza Thomas

More than 1 raided yogurt shop, police say

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expressed outrage at the killings and made an appeal during a news conference for someone with information to come forward.

"There was just a great deal of shock that this could occur," Todd said. "Violence is all around us."

Waters said he's confident police will solve the murder, but said it may take some time.

Amy Ayers, 15, was shot twice in the back of the head. Eliza Thomas, 17, Jennifer Hattenhausen, 17, and Sarah Hattenhausen, 15, were each shot once in the head, according to autopsy reports.

Earlier reports had said all four of the girls had been shot twice. Jennifer Hattenhausen and Thomas were employees at the shop. Sarah Hattenhausen and Ayers apparently went to the shop shortly before 11 p.m. Friday to help close. Police believe all four teens were dead

when the establishment was set afire.

"We are still operating under the theory that the probable motive is robbery," Waters said. "As far as suspects, we have not developed any specific suspects. We've received numerous calls. They have given us some names to investigate," he said.

Investigators don't know if the four knew their assailants.

Police spent the weekend questioning people who were at the yogurt shop in the hour preceding its 11 p.m. closing time Friday.

The shop has remained closed since the killings. Waters said homicide investigation also want to question anyone else who may have been at the strip shopping center Friday night.

Waters said police are waiting for a company audit to determine

the exact amount of money missing.

Waters said four of the city's six homicide investigators are working on the case. Investigators also are calling on other Austin Police Department divisions to help.

In another development Monday, police in Las Cruces, N.M., said they are looking into the Austin slayings for possible connections to a 1990 incident at a Las Cruces bowling alley that left four dead.

The Austin case has similarities to the Las Cruces slayings, which remain unsolved. In those slayings, two men robbed Las Cruces Bowl of \$5,000 and shot all the witnesses in the back of the head. The robbers set a blaze to cover up the crime, but one of the victims was able to call for help.

mouth and knew her well.

"When I found out Saturday morning, it was like a sword that had pierced my heart," Garcia told the church. "Death is always difficult. It is (easier) when it is so brutal and violent."

Several attending the service hoped the long turnout would bring solace to the families.

Lafayette Edwards knew Eliza Thomas and came Monday to pay his respects. "I have no specific religion, but I thought it was one of the sweetest ceremonies I've seen."

"This brings families and friends together for a time," said Adolamo Rivers, 65. "It's been rough for all of us, I think."

The Hattenhausen never met the young women who died, but he's dealing with the tragedy of watching his stepson cope with something a boy his age shouldn't have to confront. "He hasn't eaten in two days," Hatten said.

The four teens were killed at the I Can't Believe It's Yogurt store on West Anderson Lane. A police investigation is continuing.

"Some of us come with anger. And rightly so," Garcia said. "And yet we are called to try to transfer that into hope — that one day we will see them again in the kingdom of Heaven."

"That is our hope."

Slain teen-agers mourned at rosary

By Chuck Lindell

American-Statesman Staff

It was a time to gather strength, solace and prayers on a night nobody in the church wanted to be alone.


More than 1,000 people crowded St. Louis Catholic Church Monday night to lend support to the families of three of four slain teen-agers. They also came to try to make sense of a seemingly random and senseless act.

Family, friends and teachers overflowed the church for a rosary and vigil for Jennifer and Sarah Hattenhausen and Eliza Thomas, who with Amy Ayers were killed early Saturday during an apparent robbery.

About 60 people knelt in the aisles as quiet tears punctuated the ceremony. Young and old cried on a friend's shoulder or wiped away tears during the solemn and often moving vigil.

"There are no words to express the pain and hurt we all feel," said the Rev. Daniel Garcia. "We've been robbed. Someone we love deeply has been taken away from us."

Though the ceremony was difficult for him, Garcia's voice cracked only once. He had given first Holy Communion to Thomas last



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