

2 wrestlers come to girl's aid

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many of whom shared their own experiences with bullying.

Others looked for ways to raise money and send gifts and donations. As of Thursday, a GoFundMe page set up for the bullied teen had raised nearly \$8,000. The campaign can be found at, <https://gf.me/u/ydnhwt>. Another GoFundMe started on behalf of the boys who helped stop the incident can be found at <https://gf.me/u/yd77j3>.

A number of local groups and organizations also reached out in support. The High School wrestling team sent bouquets of flowers to the girl while the LadyJacks softball boosters started a collection to "provide the girl with money for a back to school wardrobe to start the year off feeling good about herself." Additional funds would be used to get a gift for the boys who assisted her. Donations can be sent to @NTLadyjacks20 Venmo account.

Local businesses have also reached out, including Submasters, who offered to cater a party for the girl, and John Presti of Presti Karate Studios, who offered the girl and the two boys free karate lessons.

However, beyond the donations, gifts and well-wishes, some community members are hoping the tragedy can serve as a flashpoint in the larger battle against bullying.

Twice this week, July 6 and 9, dozens of demonstrators peacefully marched the streets in North Tonawanda, calling on local officials to help put an end to bullying and violence.

One of the event's organizers is the victim's great aunt, Karen Donahue Porter. Shortly after the incident became public, Porter started a Facebook page "Amelia's Warriors" as a show of support for her niece. Through the page, she has since heard stories from numerous people in the North Tonawanda that believe the problem is becoming rampant in the area.

"There's a lot of stories that are coming out," Porter says. "People are writing to me telling me they've gone to administration at the schools and they've gone to the police and everybody turns their head and nothing's done about it."

Porter also says the tragedy

at the football field was not an isolated incident and that bullying was going on in school all year – to the point that her niece avoided school when she could.

When asked on Wednesday if the victim's family has heard anything from the school, Porter says, "We don't really hear anything from the school; we don't know what's going on with them."

The Tribune reached out to the superintendent's office on July 2 and July 8 for comment but thus far has not received a reply.

Going forward, Porter says she hopes to meet and work with members of the police department, the school district, and representatives from the local youth center to start a mentor program to help combat bullying.

"I just feel that I think the kids need counseling or something before this happens. If there's problems at home or if there's problems with their self-esteem, we need to catch it early to prevent this," Porter said.

As her organizing efforts continue, Porter is getting help from some local community organizers and activist groups.

At Wednesday's march, Leslie Nickerson of the Niagara Organizing Alliance for Hope (NOAH), said her group is offering concerned residents leadership and community organizing training to help make sure that systemic changes are made in the community. Additionally, members of the Niagara Falls Peacekeepers, a volunteer group committed to community engagement and discourse, also were on hand to participate in the march. Peacemaker's founder, former Niagara Falls City Councilman Ezra Scott Jr., says he's working to help Porter found a Peacemakers group in North Tonawanda.

Porter says she's willing to put in whatever work it takes to stop and that the community needs to bring members and officials together to make sure what happens to her niece never happens again.

"We all have to work together to stop the bullies. We need to just work together as a community and as a school and the police and everyone together. Elsewhere she noted, "They say

it takes a village to raise a child, and (looking at the demonstrators) we have a village here."

Not long after the video was first released, the parents of the 14-year-old victim issued the following statement:

"This is the most painful thing I've ever had to write...On July 1, 2020, our daughter, Amelia, was the victim of an assault in North Tonawanda. She was attacked and humiliated in front of a dozen other kids by three girls... dragged by her hair, punched and kicked repeatedly in the head as well as having urine poured on her. This whole time, she never once tried to fight...she continually tried to walk away. As many stood and watched, only two courageous, outstanding young men stepped in to help, Anthony and Simon. These boys did not know our daughter, they just knew she was in trouble, and they took action. I can't think of where we might be today had they not stopped this heinous assault on our sweet child. This being said, we cannot find enough words to praise and thank not only Anthony and Simon, but their parents, for raising young men with such courage, love and just basic human decency...Thank you.

The way our community has rallied around Amelia...the kind words, the gifts, the donations, and all the assurances that she is not alone and is very much loved, has been overwhelming. All the beautiful words of comfort and encouragement have brought a smile to her face. She has loved reading the messages of love and kindness...so again, we thank you all.

Most of all, it is our fondest wish this horrible and senseless act can turn into a positive for others, not only in our community, but for all these kids who suffer from bullying and attacks every day. Take the example of these young men, and rise above the bullies... show love and kindness, not hate. We thank each and every one of our family and friends, for their amazing support and love. We thank our community and all the others who have rallied up to take a stand. Most of all, we thank Anthony and Simon. Without their help, I shudder to think of where we could be today. Amelia is here. Amelia is strong. Amelia is still smiling.

Thank you.
– Dawn and Joseph"

To share your support for the victim, or to get involved with Porter's mission, contact the "Amelia's Warriors" Facebook group.



Gruarin promoted

Acting Niagara County Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti this week announced the promotion of Deputy Raymond Gruarin of Lewiston to the rank of lieutenant. Gruarin holds seven years of experience in law enforcement, including certifications as a field training officer, marine patrolman, hostage negotiator and law enforcement instructor. Gruarin will be assigned to the midnight shift. (Submitted photo)

LEWISTON POLICE BLOTTER

The following activity occurred Sunday, June 21, to Friday, June 26, as reported by the Lewiston Police Department. LPD reported more than 200 response calls during this period. For more information on arrests and other activity, visit the LPD's mobile app or its page on Facebook.

Sunday, June 21

- **Ridge/Burch roads, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. Patrol reported the driver of a vehicle left the scene while conducting a traffic stop. Vehicle fled into a field; four subjects were detained. Patrols responded.
- **1200 block of Pletcher Road, assist public** – Caller to 911 reported two young children in a vehicle with the keys inside. Vehicle parked in a shady area and the engine was not running. Vehicle unlocked by responders and children removed without incident.
- **Ridge Road/Big Vista Drive, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. Rightful owner cited for speed in zone; vehicle clocked at 82 mph in a 40 mph zone. Uniform traffic tickets issued for Lewiston Town Court.

Monday, June 22

- **2300 block of Upper Mountain Road, burglary** – Female caller reported a possible burglary at the residence. Caller is currently out of town received the information from the property landlord. Complainant suspected the ex's family was removing property. Patrol responded.
- **900 block of Upper Mountain Road, assist public** – Caller requested a harassment report against two other tenants. Patrol responded; report taken.
- **Vincentian Drive, assist public** – Patrol reported a female was confused about her whereabouts and needed to get home. Officers as-

- sisted.
- **2300 block of Upper Mountain Road, fire** – Caller to 911 reported a lightning strike to the house and the basement full of smoke. Patrol said the lightning strike had traveled through a cable into the residence.
- **3600 block of Ransomville Road, 911 hang-up** – Open 911 line with screaming and yelling/kids crying reported by dispatch. Patrols responded.
- **400 block of Dutton Drive, check welfare** – 911 call to LPD office reported a female out of control at the residence. Patrols responded.
- **5900 block of Hyde Park Boulevard, theft** – 911 call taken from a male. Patrol responded, no report.
- **Saunders Settlement/Comstock roads, traffic complaint** – Caller to 911 reported a dark blue sedan all over the road; plate number provided. One suspect in custody for driving while intoxicated/drugs; aggravated unlicensed operation, third; operating without a license; uninspected motor vehicle; and moving from a lane unsafely. Appearance and uniform traffic tickets issued for Lewiston Town Court.

Tuesday, June 23

- **2200 block of Saunders Settlement Road, suspicious activity** – Officer initiated call. Patrol reported a vehicle pullover; driver was slow to stop. Driver cited for speed in zone; vehicle clocked at 70 mph in a 45 zone. Uniform traffic ticket issued for Lewiston Town Court.
- **2900 block of Saunders Settlement Road, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. Male driver in custody for aggravated unlicensed operation. Appearance ticket issued for Lewiston Town Court. Driver provided a courtesy transport to a Niagara Falls Boulevard hotel.

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