



Ceres Department of Public Safety Police Division

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Media RELEASE For Immediate Release

Contact: Jose Berber, Sergeant (209) 538-5719
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Fatal Traffic Collision

On 2-09-11 at 8:58 AM, the Ceres Police Department received a report of a vehicle collision at the intersection of Darwin Ave. and Fowler Rd. Officers discovered a full-sized Chevrolet pick up truck had struck a group of four 13 and 14 year old female students who were on their way to Mae Hensley Junior High which is located approximately a block away.

One female student is listed as stable but critical as of 2:00 PM this afternoon. She was flown to UC Davis Medical Center. The second is listed as non-critical and is being held for observation at a local hospital that she was transported to. The third received an injury to her leg. Tragically, the fourth young student was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Investigators speculate the truck was traveling southbound on Darwin Ave approaching the intersection of Fowler Rd. The group of students were walking west on the sidewalk, on the north side of Fowler Rd. The students began to cross the roadway when the truck struck them. It is too soon to confirm, but it is suspected the driver of the truck possibly failed to stop at the posted stop sign.

The speed of the truck is in the process of being determined. Some witnesses have indicated they saw the driver either on a cell phone or wearing some type of earphones when the collision occurred. Investigators have not substantiated nor have they eliminated this possibility. They have numerous eye witnesses to interview to make a determination. They are piecing the scene together to establish what actually occurred and attempting to establish the chain of events that lead to the collision.

The driver has been cooperative with the police. He voluntarily accompanied the police to our station to give an account of what occurred. Details of the driver's

interview thus far, are not being released by the investigative team since it is an ongoing investigation.

The Ceres School District has established counseling services for the students. They have asked that and are encouraging parents who require these services for their children to contact either the Ceres School District Office or Mae Hensley Junior High to make the arrangements.

The investigative team is encouraging anyone who has information to this collision to please call Sergeant Danny Vierra at 538-5723. This is an ongoing investigation and I will keep you posted on any new developments of this case.

***** As of 5:00 PM. Investigators have been interviewing potential witnesses. Investigators are not releasing any additional information at this time. However, they did locate a fifth victim of the accident. She is a student from Mae Hensley Junior High School. She sustained minor injuries as the truck came to rest on the south side of the road. Her identity is not being released at this time.

Update Media Release.

2-10-11 / 09:30 AM

The driver of the vehicle involved in the fatal collision, which occurred on 02-09-11, was identified as Larry Duke 45 years of age, a local Ceres resident. Investigators are currently following up on numerous potential eyewitness accounts. The investigation team will not release any further details of the case at this time to protect the integrity of the investigation. Criminal charges are pending the review and the completion of statements, and the results of medical or forensic evidence. The investigative team is encouraging anyone with information to contact Sgt. Danny Vierra (209) 538-5723.