

Teen dead, boy hurt in two shootings

The 15-year-old, of Grays Ferry, was slain while riding his bike. The boy, 12, of East Frankford, was hit in a drive-by shooting.

Brendan McCarthy and Ira Porter, Inquirer staff writers

A 15-year-old Grays Ferry boy was shot and killed while riding his bicycle yesterday. Hours earlier, a 12-year-old boy was wounded in a drive-by shooting in the city's East Frankford neighborhood.

By last night, there had been no arrests.

Since September, 29 school-age children have been killed in the city.

Around 3:30 p.m., the teen was shot in the chest while on his bicycle. Police said witnesses told them he was accosted from behind by three men on bicycles at the corner of 28th and Wharton Streets.

The teen was shot once in the left side of his chest with a .380 semiautomatic. He stumbled down the 1300 block of 28th Street before he collapsed, leaving a pool of blood.

He was taken to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where he was later pronounced dead, said Detective Sgt. Al Strong of the Homicide Unit.

Strong said the attack appeared to be a retaliation for an earlier shooting in the neighborhood. He added that police were questioning two people last night. One man, 18, was found with a .38 revolver and a stolen bike. Police did not release the name or age of the second suspect.

A family member identified the dead youth as **Malik Upchurch**, of the 1300 block of 27th Street, around the corner from the scene of the shooting.

"I can't believe this," said Juanita Johnson, Upchurch's aunt. "He was the sweetest boy you would ever want to meet. He always had a smile on his face."

Susie Johnson said she was planning a vigil in remembrance of her grandson, who, with his younger brother, lived with her.

Neighborhood children said Upchurch had just finished school at Alcorn Middle School at 33rd and Reed Streets. He popped wheelies on his bike, played basketball at Stinger Square Park,

and volunteered giving out lunches there, people who knew him said.

"This is very unfortunate," said Inspector William Colarulo, a police spokesman. "This is the second shooting we have had today of a juvenile."

In the East Frankford shooting, a 12-year-old boy and a man were wounded.

The boy, Brian Pressley, was standing outside Torres Deli Grocery, at Mulberry and Foulkrod Streets, when shots rang out shortly after 10:40 a.m. One bullet grazed his lower back. Rasheem Adams, 25, of the 1800 block of Harrison Street, received a bullet wound in his thigh.

Brian was treated at Temple University Hospital and released last night. Adams was listed in stable condition last night at the hospital.

Police said three shots were fired from a red, two-door SUV with tinted windows. Two men were in the vehicle, and at least one shot was also fired farther down Mulberry Street, police said.

The Pressley family moved into the neighborhood from Southwest Philadelphia three weeks ago, said Kevin Pressley, 17, Brian's brother.

"I heard about five shots," Kevin Pressley said. "I was hoping nobody got hit."

After being shot, Brian ran about a block down Foulkrod Street to his home, where his stepfather, George Brown, alerted police. Police are searching for a motive and suspects.

Anthony Gordon, a father of four and a youth football coach who lives on Foulkrod Street, said that when he heard the gunshots, he ran outside and saw Brian running toward his home.

"I don't even want my children outside anymore," he said. "First thing in the morning, instead of hearing roosters, we hear gunshots. It's sickening."

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