

15-year-old is fatally shot on the street in Kingsessing

Ira Porter, Inquirer staff writer

A 15-year-old Kingsessing boy was mortally wounded yesterday afternoon in a street shooting on his block that left three other people injured.

Tyrique Lovett was shot twice in the chest by two gunmen who walked up to a crowd on the 2000 block of Alden Street about 5:20 p.m. and started blasting with semiautomatic weapons, police said.

The teenager, a 10th grader at Bartram High School, lived on the block with his mother and younger brother.

After the attack, Lovett made it to a neighbor's home and collapsed, police said. He was taken to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and transferred to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where he was declared dead.

Lovett's grandmother, Lottie Sanders, who also lives on the block, said the youth was talking to friends when the shooting started. She showed reporters a picture of her grandson taken at a school dance last year, and said: "He was looking forward to Christmas."

She then turned her attention to the boy's killers. "I want to know why you had to kill my grandson. He's just 15. He didn't want to hurt anybody," she said. "He was nothing but a blessing.

"He came home from school today happy," Sanders said. "His mother had just bought him a cell phone for Christmas."

The three other victims, two young men and a woman, were also taken to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Their conditions and identities were not released.

Police said one man was shot in the back and the other sustained an arm wound.

The female victim, described as an off-duty postal worker in her 30s, was clearly a bystander, according to police. She was on her way to visit her mother, who lives on the block, when she was hit in the right thigh.

Police last night said they did not know whom the shooters had targeted, who they were, or how they escaped from the scene—a narrow block full of two-story rowhouses.

Police Commissioner Sylvester M. Johnson arrived at the scene last night to offer his condolences to the boy's family and speak to reporters gathered outside. Johnson said the killing was another tragedy resulting from there being too many illegal guns on the city's streets.

Vincent Thompson, a Philadelphia School District spokesman, said crisis-intervention counselors would be available at Bartram today, the last day of classes before the Christmas break. Counselors will also be available during and after the break.

"The School District of Philadelphia gives its deepest condolences to the family at this time," Thompson said.

"We are losing too many children in this city and in our country to violence in the community," he added. "We are going to continue to fight to keep our children safe."

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Inquirer staff writer Frederick Cusick contributed to this article.