



Accident Results in Death of Shirley Four-Year-Old

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General Manager

For over two hours on Friday, residents of Shirley were gripped by disbelief and then sadness as news spread quickly of an accident involving a small child. In a town that seldom hears emergency sirens and even then, usually just from one vehicle, the commotion generated from more than a half dozen emergency response units speeding into Shirley brought nearly everyone out of their homes.

By the time a Lifeline helicopter was spotted in the sky heading toward Shirley, residents from all areas of town had gathered together on sidewalks and streets, some in shock and many others crying, as they heard the reports of four-year-old Jordyn Vaughn having been accidentally struck while playing in the driveway of her parents' home by a vehicle driven by her uncle, 20-year-old Brian Vaughn of Shirley.

The accident occurred at 5:12 p.m. at the home of Robert and Rebecca Vaughn, on the corner of South and New Jersey streets on the town's southwest side.

Shirley Deputy Marshal Earl Patterson said he was in his vehicle patrolling Main Street shortly after 5 p.m. when the report came over his radio that a child had been hit. Patterson said the dispatcher did not state the town, but heard her report the incident had occurred at South and New Jersey streets. His first thought was "How many towns in Hancock County could have a South and a New Jersey intersect?" So, Patterson immediately headed in that direction. As he made his way there, he saw the blue lights of emergency volunteers and then sped to the scene as he realized the incident was indeed in Shirley.

An ambulance from Condo & Son Funeral Home arrived on the scene just after the Shirley Fire Department rescue team at 5:16 p.m. After working for several minutes, the EMT's placed Jordyn in the ambulance that was then escorted from the scene by Patterson.

However, before exiting town, a decision was made to meet a paramedic unit from the Greenfield Fire Department. The two ambulances met on the north end of Main Street, drawing the attention of residents there before another rescue unit and at least three vehicles from the Hancock County Sheriff's Department, with sirens blaring, sped into town from the south end of Main Street and turned west on South Street to the Vaughn house.

Within minutes of the accident, a prayer chain was started as members of local churches began calling each other asking everyone to pray for Jordyn and her family. Residents standing outside of their homes were yelling over the noise and confusion to their neighbors, sharing what news they had. As the EMT's and paramedics in the two

ambulances stopped on north Main St. continued to attend to Jordyn, word began spreading down the street that a Lifeline helicopter was in route and planning to meet the ambulance at Shirley Park.

Before the helicopter had landed, dozens of residents had gathered at the park where musicians and many others recently began setting up for the town's annual Bluegrass Jamboree. Townspeople drove in and out of the park, stopping and asking those who were walking there or standing around if anyone had further news. Deep concern and worry was shared for Jordyn's family, especially her uncle, and for the emergency response workers, so many of whom are family or close friends of those who had gathered helplessly nearby.

A shared feeling of profound sadness suddenly swept across the park when several minutes after landing, the Lifeline helicopter's engine was shut off. People soon left the park carrying to their neighbors the news that Jordyn Vaughn had passed away.

The well-known and large extended family of Jordyn's living in and around Shirley made word of the tragedy even more heartbreaking for the community which has shared in the loss of other family members in the past year. Jordyn's great-grandfather Richard Vaughn passed away almost exactly a year earlier on June 26, 2003. Then the family faced the unexpected deaths of Judy Polston in Sept. 2003 and her husband Ben Polston, brother of Jordyn's great-grandmother Doris Vaughn, just over two months ago. The Polstons were long-time business owners in Shirley. So many were more than just relatives, they were also close friends.

Jordyn's grandfather, Gary Vaughn, has been a member of the Shirley Volunteer Fire Department for many years, and her grandmother Sheryl Vaughn, served as Shirley Deputy Clerk-Treasurer several years ago. They live right beside their son Robert on Alabama and South streets with Jordyn's great-grandmother Doris Vaughn right across the street from them.

Brian Vaughn, who has been cleared of any wrongdoing in the incident that has been declared an accident, joined the Shirley Vol. Fire Department less than a year ago. He was at his brother's home as they worked on installing firefighter's lights on his Chevy full-size truck. No one was aware that Jordyn was near the truck when he began backing out of the driveway.

Family friends said there has been an outpouring of support from the community, including a drive to help the family raise money to cover funeral expenses. Though the heartbreak and grief felt by the community at-large is certainly nowhere near that of the Vaughn family, the tragedy has impacted nearly everyone in Shirley as they acknowledge how our lives can be changed in just one moment.