

Death saddens, shocks Brockport students, staff

Slain 7-year-old recalled for 'contagious smile'

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Several days after a classmate was brutally slain in his Sweden home, Brockport Central School District students have returned to school after a weeklong spring break.

Last week, 7-year-old Abraham Cardenas was killed inside his Lake Road home. His mother, Hanane Mouhib, a 36-year-old former nurse practitioner who had been hospitalized for mental health problems just weeks before Abraham's death, has been charged with second-degree murder.

The boy was a first-grader at Brockport's Barclay Elementary School, 40 Allen St.

"Abe was an incredibly loving and empathetic little boy who loved coming to school and making others laugh," said Julia Fagan, his first-grade teacher. "The entire Barclay community mourns the loss of Abe. We will miss his bright eyes and contagious smile."

Superintendent Lesli Myers said that members of a countywide consortium on trauma, illness, and grief had spent a significant amount of time preparing for students, their families and staff returning on Monday morning.

"Students and staff are sad, they are shocked, and they are shaken," Myers said. "This is a very difficult complex and challenging situation that we are experiencing together as a community."

Myers said that the young age of the victim and the way his death unfolded made the situation especially difficult.

Monroe County sheriff's deputies say Mouhib is accused of stabbing and decapitating Abraham with a large kitchen knife inside one room of the family home while her husband, another son and mother-in-law were in an adjacent room.

Three successive 911 calls were made from the home about 8:20 p.m. Thursday, two reporting a suicidal female armed with a knife and a third alerting police that someone had been injured. When deputies arrived, they struggled to subdue Mouhib, ultimately using pepper spray and a stun gun before taking her into custody.

"What I appreciate most about my staff is they are suspending how they are feeling and they are most concerned about the students they are serving," Myers said.

Staff were provided with a variety of resources, including tips for dealing with students of different ages and information on common signs of grief, and how to help. Those resources are also available on the district website and have been provided to families in both hard copy and through e-mail blasts.

"The key thing is to acknowledge the fact that a loss did happen, We are not focusing on the other details of it," Myers said.

She acknowledged that it was a very difficult morning for many of the students in the district.

"They do know that a classmate died and kids are really sad about that," she said.

The district will provide grief counselors and other services for affected families "for as long as they're needed," Myers said.

Counselors are also on hand at Hill Elementary School, where Abraham’s older brother is a fourth-grade student.

Myers repeated comments she made on Friday that there were no warning signs based on interactions between Mouhib and the school.

“There was very little contact with Abraham’s mother,” Myers said. “Most of the interaction was with the dad.”

On Saturday afternoon, Brockport provided counselors at Barclay School for children, families and staff coping with Abraham’s death. More than 50 people came to Barclay Elementary seeking counselors, according to district officials.

Nearly 3,400 students attend Brockport Central School District. About 500 students are enrolled at Barclay, which has kindergarten through third grade.



A Sweden woman has been charged with killing her 7-year-old son. It took place at this house on 5499 Lake Road in Sweden. CARLOS ORTIZ/[@CFORTIZ_DANDC](#)/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Abraham Cardenas