

Victim Still in Hospital, Shooter Still at Large



(Crystal A. Proxmire, 12/13/2011)

The Dec. 8, 2011 shooting of a Taft Adult Education Student had three schools on lockdown as police searched for the man who shot a 20 year old student in the leg in front of the school just before classes were due to be released. Though police used K9 and helicopter support, the suspect was not found.

At the Dec.12, 2011 Ferndale City Council meeting, Police Chief Collins updated the public on the incident, stating that the victim is still hospitalized, but that he will "be okay."

Collins said there are extra patrols in the area in the morning and afternoon when students are coming and going, and that police are helping school administrators with placement of new cameras on the property, located just off 8 Mile at Allen and Fielding. "We are actively working with the school to improve security there."

 He recognized that the School District has been cooperative and that emergency lockdown plans were successful. "All the different agencies and entities that were involved acted very quickly," he said, noting that schools were safely secured and the neighborhoods checked for danger before dark. Oakland County quickly provided a helicopter, and Madison Heights police brought a tracking dog within 15 minutes. "The plan worked. The bad guy did get away. We're doing our best to get that end of it."

"All the indications we have now is that it is a robbery, it was not a school incident," Collins said.

Stephanie Hall, spokesperson for Ferndale Schools, responded to Ferndale 115 News inquiries by stating "The police are conducting their investigation on this situation that occurred on school property. In the past, I believe the police

department has tracked their runs by address. The school district is unable to report any details about the student.

'The Taft Education Center has operated Adult & Alternative Education programming since 2002. There are approximately 350 students enrolled there. Students range in age from 16 to 20 for alternative education, and 20+ for adult education programs. Each year, 200-300 students receive their high school diplomas through the district's alternative education program. 

'The Ferndale Schools' adult and alternative education programs have been in place for many years. We are continually engaged in evaluating our programs to improve them and increase student success, in alternative education just as we're evaluating our elementary programs." Hall did not give information about the number of times police have been called to the property, and did not answer questions about what the district is doing to keep Taft students secure, and about how the victim's medical care and needs during recovery might be met.

The shooter is still at large. Lt. William Wilson released the following description:

"The suspect was described as:

- Black male
- 18-20 years old
- 506 to 509 tall
- Medium build
- Clean shaven
- Wearing
 - o Dark knit hat

- o Dark hooded sweatshirt
- o Tan (pancake) colored pants
- Armed with a black semi-automatic 9mm pistol.

Anyone with information should call the Ferndale Police at (248) 541-3650.