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Student killed by drunk wrote of fears in diary

By Janet Sugameli

Drunken drivers taking the lives of innocent people continually became the subject 18-year-old Troy High student Ashley Marie Easterbrook wrote about in her journal.

In a journal entry she made, addressed to God in May 1995, Ashley wrote of a poem she read about a girl who didn't drink alcohol but was killed by a drunken driver.

"The poem is sad, but true," her journal entry said. "It's never the person who drank that gets hurt. Please help me and everyone to be safe on the road. It's scary to think of all the people who I know that drink, that maybe a friend of mine could injure or kill me or another one of my friends. It scare me to death. Literally..."

On Friday Easterbrook's family joined with the families of Andrew Stindt, Michael Jamieson, both 19 and 1996 Athens graduates, and Jeremy St. Cyr, 18, who was approaching graduation from Athens, invited the media to reiterate their plea to stop drunk driving. Easterbrook's father David also requested the public to help police determine the whereabouts of 33-year-old Auburn Hills woman Lori Ann Smith, the drunken driver who ran a red light and crashed into the car Stindt, Jamieson and Easterbrook ere in. All three students and Smith died at the corner of Long Lake and Crooks June 3.

Jeremy St. Cyr died on May 24 while in the Chicago area with friends who were all seniors at Athens High School. St. Cyr was in the back seat of the car which was stopped at a toll booth, when a 40-year-old allegedly drunken man from Bollingbrook, Ill. Crashed into the car. Five other students in the car were injured in the crash, two of them severely.

"Our goal today as parents, brothers and sisters, is to make it crystal clear that these four innocent teenagers did absolutely nothing wrong," Easterbrook said.

"We want to make it crystal clear that these four innocent teenagers were murdered by adults. Adults who had the right to drink, but did not have the right to get behind the wheel of a car and murder our sons, our daughter, and our brothers and our sister... We



Ashley Easterbrook's brother Adam and her mother Gail stand beside a photograph of Ashley at a press conference. Along with other family members of the Troy teens killed recently in auto accidents, the Easterbrooks told of Ashley's writings in her diary about drunk drivers in hopes of discouraging motorists from drinking and driving.

are upset that normal, everyday people make the choice to drive after they have been drinking and in many instances sober people are aware that the impaired individual is getting behind the wheel of a car.”

The last entry in Easterbrook’s journal was a prayer for Jeremy, said Jeremy’s father Richard St. Cyr.

At the press conference, St. Cyr suggested an alternative to the Red Wings flags flying from cars in the area. “If we could get as many red ribbons to replace the red flags we’ve seen in the last month, think of the impact we could have,” St. Cyr said.

“These children could have been your children,” St. Cyr said of the accidents. “I don’t want to grieve with you.” St. Cyr went to the funeral homes and grieved with the families of the three killed in the second crash.

St. Cyr also said the families of the deceased students have a mission. “We need to stop this senseless killing,” he added.

Recent Athens graduate Doug Spagnola said he knew all four students well and touched on each friend’s accomplishments. “I think it’s evident my friends didn’t do anything wrong, and that scares me,” Spagnola said of the accidents. “We are angry. We live in fear. We need you to do your part in stopping us from living in fear.”

Andrews’ father John Stindt, said for the past three weeks the families of those students killed by drunken drivers have received cards and phone calls from people expressing sympathy. Although Stindt said there is little one can do to relieve suffering, he encouraged people to participate in community programs such as the Troy Community Coalition for the prevention of substance abuse, and the Oakland County chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. “If you have been drinking, don’t get behind the wheel of a car,” Stindt said. “You too can become a murderer.”