

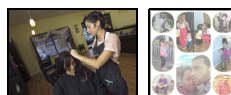


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MENU



Jeramie Robinson, owner of Blown Out salon, adds a colorful hair extension for mother, Darlene Davis, at the business on E. Main St. in Meriden, Thursday, October 16, 2014. Robinson is offering pink and blue colored hair extensions in memory of Sanaa Reynolds, 9, and half-brother Dacari Robinson, 3, who lost their lives in a deadly crash on Sunday evening. Robinson is donating a portion of the profits to fundraising efforts. | Dave Zajac / Record-Journal



## Vigil for accident victims from Meriden set for Friday; donations continue

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**By Mary Ellen Godin Record-Journal staff**

MERIDEN — Community support continues to pour in to help the young mother who lost her two children and boyfriend in a deadly crash on Sunday evening.

A candlelight vigil in memory of city residents Dacari Robinson, 3, his half-sister, Sanaa Reynolds, 9, and Dacari's father, Darin Robinson, 26, will take place today at 6 p.m. at City Park. The children's mother and Darin Robinson's girlfriend, Baughnita Leary, the lone survivor of the crash, is expected to attend the event, an organizer said.

The family was traveling on Interstate 95 in Waterford when their car was rear-ended by a tractor-trailer. Dacari Robinson was pronounced dead at the scene, while Sanaa Reynolds and Darin Robinson died Tuesday at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

A local family advocate and longtime friend of both families, Gwen Samuels, said she has the city's permission to host the vigil. She has invited officials including Mayor Manny Santos, School Superintendent Mark D. Benigni, U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty, D-5th District, and other lawmakers. The Rev. Dante Moss is scheduled to speak, and other speakers are being arranged. An earlier vigil was canceled because Leary wanted to attend, Samuels said.

Samuels said politicians should take a break from the campaign trail to support a grieving family and community.

"It's still surreal," Samuels said. "We are a community. Any tragedy affects us. A tragic loss of life and a call too soon, that should bring you there. When tragedy hits you have to come off the trail and put people before politics."

Information about the event can be found [here](#).

Donations for the family also continue on a [gofundme.com](#) account set up by a family friend. More than \$12,400 was raised by one account as of Thursday afternoon. Another, set up by a relative of Darin Robinson, has raised \$2,400 for Robinson.

Regan Technologies Corp., a Wallingford business, set up a fund for Leary: the Baughnita Leary Fund, c/o Regan Technologies Corp., 860 N. Main St. Ext., Wallingford, CT 06492. Leary has worked for the company as a receptionist and accounting clerk for the last three years, said Donna Regan, the company's human resources director.

At Roger Sherman School, which both children attended, Principal Lysette Torres, an assistant principal and a child psychologist addressed the fourth-graders who shared classes with Sanaa Reynolds on Wednesday. Parents were made aware of the events Tuesday evening. Students who wanted to discuss their memories or were showing signs of difficulty were given individual attention, Torres said.

Also on Wednesday, the school brought in psychology experts and invited parents to discuss how to address the loss of their friend and classmate in the home.

"She was very popular," Torres said of Sanaa. "She had a smile that lit up the room when she walked in, a really sweet girl."

Torres said Dacari Robinson had been in the school's pre-school program for only two months but his teachers had "wonderful things to say about him." Their mother, Baughnita, who also attended the school when she was a child, was a familiar face at family events held at the school, she said.

“It’s been difficult for them,” Torres said about the students. But the school community is grateful for the help and support it’s gotten from the central office and from the Community Health Center, Rushford Center and the Child Guidance Clinic, she said.

Jeramie Robinson also wanted to do what she could for the family. Her husband, Abraham Robinson, is a cousin of Darin Robinson, and wanted to help the families. As owner of Blown Out Salon on East Main Street, Jeramie Robinson is used to fund-raising events. She is offering pink and blue colored hair extensions in memory of Sanaa and Dacari.

“We usually do them for breast cancer awareness,” Jeramie Robinson said.

The extensions are usually \$8 each, but Robinson is charging \$10 and donating a portion of the profits to the fundraising efforts.

The extensions have been a hit for moms and girls, and for some youngsters who knew the children, she said.

“This was a perfect way to show something in memory of them and raise some money for them,” she said.

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