

Student hit on Middlebelt, injuries minor

**BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER**

For the second year, the school at East Middle School on Middlebelt in Farmington Hills has been dampened by a tragic accident.

Tuesday, at 7:39 a.m., Jacob Barker, 12, was struck by a 1988 Ford Escort driven by Shantel Holloway, 21, of Warren at the traffic signal crossing next to the school. Barker was walking with his bike to school.

Holloway was ticketed for running a red light, according to Farmington Hills police. The boy was taken to St. Mary Hospital in Livonia where he was treated and released for minor injuries.

At 7:05 a.m. on Oct. 17, 1994, Zena Hermie, 10, was struck as she crossed Middlebelt at Grammarcy, 300 feet north of the light, to catch a bus to Harrison High School. In that case, the driver was not found at fault, but the girl's injuries were serious.

After extensive surgery, the girl survived, but with permanent serious injuries.

Both accidents occurred in the

early morning and involved students crossing the busy road. But the similarities end there, according to Farmington Hills police.

"That (accident involving Jacob Barker) could have happened at any traffic light," said Sgt. Dennis Green, traffic supervisor. "People sometimes don't watch to see whether the light has changed."

Karen Lucas, whose son Michael, 11, attends East, believes conditions are not safe for students.

"My son has told me that people drive right up to the light before stopping," she said. "Middlebelt is such a busy road for the school to be on."

Lucas said with the prospect of more students and more traffic from the new Timbercrest development, at 12 Mile and Middlebelt, the city should take extra precautions.

"We should have a crossing guard or a bridge to walk over the road," she said. "Clarenceville (High School) has one and it's on 12 Mile."



Accident scene: Paramedics are about to transport Jacob Barker to St. Mary Hospital after the youngster was hit by a car Tuesday morning near East Middle School. The boy's mother, Renae Vinson, and East Principal Gene Seaborn stand near Jacob's crumpled bicycle.

Publisher

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Gendron's attorney said his client merely presided over a failed small business venture.

Oakland County Prosecutors contended Gendron never intended to publish a second edition and, as a result, accepted money fraudulently.

They point to a letter Gendron sent to the city of Farmington in response that he register the business.

The letter dated Feb. 1, 1993 states all Gendron's business — including Homefront Delivery Corp. — were no longer in operation. Spotless Cleaners and Compulink also operated out of the rented office.

A former employee testified Gendron had been demanding sales reps to turn in money by Thursday night, the day before employees arrived to work to find the office closed and empty.

"He was upset he didn't have it at the time he wanted," said Kevin Murdock, who worked as a graphic artist. "We couldn't understand why he wanted to have it then instead of next morning."

The venture was an outgrowth of Gendron's window and gutter cleaning business, which used flyers to drum up customers. The newspaper was seen as a low-cost alternative to the Observer, Gendron said.

The first paper was published in January 1993 and distributed in the Livonia area, Gendron testified. He estimated it cost \$5,000 to put out the first edition.

He needed between \$4,000 and \$7,000 to put out a second edition. He had \$3,661, he said.

Under cross-examination by assistant prosecutor Deanna Kelley, Gendron said he used some of the money to pay people to move equipment from The Winery. He also admitted paying his rent with it.

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