

Slain victim's family came first

See related story, 3A

By Todd Schneider
staff writer

When Keith Ciszewski was 21, he let his sister, Geraldine, drive his brand new, maroon Chevrolet Camaro on her 16th birthday. Just went and handed her the keys to his most prized possession and let her tool around the family's northwest Detroit neighborhood for the day.

That's the kind of man Ciszewski, of Livonia, was.

And when she brought it back that night with a fresh dent in the door, well, he didn't really buy her explanation about stones in the road.

"But he did forgive me. And with the way Keith felt about cars, especially that car . . . Geraldine Janssens, now 32, recalled Friday, while trying to hold back tears.

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First is the unpredictable nature of joint pain and immobility. Second is that the schedule must make room for elderly persons who live alone, and who cannot drive. The office, almost daily, receives a call from a hurried elderly person, living alone, who suddenly cannot walk, but must do so to continue self care and independent living. Furthermore, the person must see the doctor immediately, as now is the only time a friend or relative can volunteer to drive the patient.

A home visit later in the day is not practical. X-rays and joint aspiration may be needed and require an office or hospital setting. The alternative of going to an agency room is expensive, and likely will take up a volunteer helper's complete day. A crisis exists for the caller; the office must see that person now. Scheduled people will have to wait.

Most individuals with arthritis, can imagine themselves as needing such attention at a future date, and accept the delay in their appointment with grace.

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459-1954
41290 Joy Road
Plymouth

'Keith was the best. He was loved by everybody who knew him and he deeply loved his wife and children.'

— Jim Cambridge
friend, neighbor

That, too, is the kind of man Ciszewski was.

FAMILY CAME FIRST in Ciszewski's life. Family and a close-knit group of four childhood friends. Then his job with the U.S. Postal Service.

It was at his job that Ciszewski, 37, and three other co-workers were killed Thursday when a former employee went on a shooting rampage in the Royal Oak Post Office before turning the gun on himself.

Funeral services for Ciszewski will be held 11 a.m. today from St. Colette Catholic Church on Newburgh in Livonia with arrangements from Leonard A. Turowski & Son Funeral Home on Middlebelt. Burial will be at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

Family members and a close friend said Friday that Ciszewski was as devoted to his family as anyone they'd ever known. That meant not only his immediate family — wife, Constance, and three children — but also an extended family including in-laws, six nieces and nephews, friends and neighbors.

"Keith was the best. He was loved by everybody who knew him and he deeply loved his wife and children,"

said Jim Cambridge, a Livonia neighbor and one of the quartet of friends who grew up together.

AND CARS. How Ciszewski loved cars, said his mother, Jacqueline, of Commerce Township.

"He'd go out at least once a week and just look at cars. He bought one for me once and it took him a whole year just to find the right one, the right color, at the right price," she said.

"Then he'd come over and wash my car just so he could spend time with it."

The cars — and other projects, like building a deck on the back of Janssens' new house — were really just an excuse to spend time with the people he loved, family members said.

Keith used to call Connie at home a couple of times each day with a joke and to hear her voice, Jacqueline Ciszewski said. He spent as much time as possible with son Christopher, 10, and daughters Natalie, 7, and Claire, 2. The two older children attend Hoover Elementary.

Another child, Adam, died shortly after he was born in 1983, Jacqueline Ciszewski said.

Shooting baskets with Chris was a

favorite activity.

Keith was outgoing, with a playful side and was a joy to be around, family and friends said.

But he had a serious, sensitive side too, said Janssens. "Our father died when I was 13. That really drew us close together," she said.

"He was always looking out for me. Making sure I wasn't getting into trouble and that he was there for me."

Married in 1981, the Ciszewskis moved to Livonia about seven years ago after living briefly in Farmington Hills.

KEITH CISZEWSKI was a 1972 Redford Bishop College graduate.

He earned an associate's degree from Henry Ford Community College, going back for a third year after his father's death affected his grades the year before, his mother said.

His postal service career spanned nearly 20 years.

Other hobbies included swimming and bowling. He'd jump into the pool laughing, cannonball style — at the neighborhood Fairway Farms Swim and Tennis Club to amuse his kids and himself, Janssens said.

He bowled in the 170s in a league at Wonderland Lanes in Livonia and was "really getting better this year," his friend Cambridge said.

"But his family, that was his first pleasure."

A memorial fund has been set up to benefit the three Ciszewski children. Donations may be made to the Ciszewski Memorial Fund, care of Michigan National Bank, 37276 Six Mile, Livonia 48154.

Hills postal worker hit by RO gunfire

Continued from Page 1

Sister Mary Patricia of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills wouldn't release background information about McIlvane. The center cares for children removed from their homes because of child abuse or neglect, she said.

"It's hard to deal with, to know

that he was a child here," she said. "It just strikes me to think what his family is going through."

The nun said she was working at the center when McIlvane was a resident but didn't know him personally.

"I remember him standing in the hall," she said. "I hope that peace and healing comes to all who are involved."

Missing Hills man found dead, suicide suspected

A 60-year-old Farmington Hills man who was reported missing by his wife Thursday morning was found dead that afternoon in Walnut Lake, West Bloomfield police said. The drowning was still being investigated Friday, but suicide was suspected.

A passerby found the fully clothed body of the Bloomfield Township book broker at about 5 p.m. Police found footprints leading to the lake and found no signs of trauma to the body. The man's car was found nearby, according to West Bloomfield Police Chief Ronald Cronin.

The man's wife reported him

missing to Farmington Hills police Thursday morning after his business partner called her at 9 a.m. to say he had not reported to work.

The man's wife and business partner were concerned because they said the man followed a similar routine everyday, arriving at the office before 6 a.m. A witness said she saw the man unlocking his office door at about 5:45 a.m. She recognized his car in the parking lot, according to a police report.

When the witness looked into the parking lot at 6:30 a.m., the man's car was gone, according to the report.

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