

## Lucaj from page 1A

With tears welling in his eyes, the popular athlete's father seemed still in disbelief as he watched a TV report on the events that led to his son's death. Then he said, "He's not coming back."

"Lou" surviving family had a hard time understanding why such a bright star was stolen from them. His sister Gina, 14, remembered how he bragged to her in a good natured way about his accomplishments and what he owned. And for the son of Albanian immigrants, it was impressive.

Lou Lucaj had been a high school athlete and serious student. He worked six days a week at his uncle's restaurant and went to school at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn where he would have graduated with an associate's degree in criminal justice.

"He wanted to become a police officer, maybe in Farmington Hills, Novi or West Bloomfield," said his father. "He talked with the family about it."

The former Clarenceville quarter-back (he once threw three touchdowns in one game) not only attended school and work, but still managed to attend St. Paul's Catholic Church in Warren every Sunday, along with his family.

On Thursday, some family members had attended the arraignment of Lucaj's accused killers at 36th District Court in Detroit.

Robert Waucouch, 22, and Dominic Garcia, 18, alleged members of the Detroit gang Cash Flow Posse, were formally charged before Magistrate Kerry Leon Jackson on first-degree murder, assault with intent to commit murder and felony firearms charges. If convicted, the men could face life sentences.

The suspects are being held without bond in the Wayne County Jail. Their preliminary examination is scheduled for April 9.

The family watched as gang members and family members of the accused claimed the two suspects would not kill anyone unless "provoked." It is hard for Lucaj's family to believe that he would provoke anyone or that shooting someone is ever an appropriate response.

"They (family members of the accused) said my brother (Tony) was flashing gang signs in the court," said Gina Lucaj. "He doesn't know anything about gangs."

In fact, Detroit police have theorized that the murder was the result of Cash Flow Posse members mistaking Lucaj and the three friends he'd known since he was 6 as being from a rival gang.

## Klenke from page 1A

which could result in Smith being out of jail in less than five years with good behavior.

David Klenke died Sept. 25 while riding his bike with his brother Stephen on 10 Mile. The black Ford Thunderbird, driven by Smith, crossed the center line and struck the boy as his brother watched helplessly.

"We were hoping for more than six years," said Midge Klenke, the victim's mother. "But he's the judge. He has to make that decision."

Klenke and Barron both said that Smith's extensive criminal record contained assaults and

other violent behavior.

Midge Klenke said Smith seemed to blame his drinking problem and other people, including those who beat him up at parties just before the incident.

"He blames others for his actions," Barron said. "But he was so drunk that he says he doesn't remember being beaten up. He uses excuses and blames everyone except himself."

"With 14 misdemeanors, five felonies and one Holmes Youthful Training Act under his belt, I wonder how many times he's told a judge he's going to learn from his mistakes."

Midge Klenke said her son Stephen "is doing pretty well now," but said she fears that Smith could easily cause another tragedy.

"I have two kids (Stephen and Andrew, 7) and my brother has a family here," she said. "And a lot of his (Smith's) problems took place in Farmington Hills."

Smith's attorney, Elias Escobedo, said his client is remorseful. He said a six-year prison stretch will be difficult enough. Smith also has a 9-month-old son. He has not been out of jail since his arrest on the night of the hit-and-run.

Lucaj in the back of the head killed him.

"He was a very hard worker," said his mother Diela. "He was serious about his job and school. He had only been (to Windsor) maybe two times before."

## Program from page 1A

place where they can do what they want," Lipa says. "It's not structured from the top down."

And true to his words, the students themselves have had a big hand in deciding what activities they want. Students formed a committee to decide what types of activities they'd want if they had their druthers, which they do.

"We went around during our lunch periods to find out what kids wanted," said Nicole LaVake, a Power Middle School eighth grader. "We still haven't gotten it totally organized. Almost everyone wanted some sports activities. Some of the kids on the volleyball and basketball teams are dying to come, but they've got practice."

"You can do anything you want without someone telling you what to do," she said.

That freedom to enjoy activities in a safe environment with some supervision attracted about 80 kids a day for the first week.

"My mom thinks it's a good idea," said Angela Fodor, 12, an East Middle School sixth grader, another one of the students who chose activities. "We just wanted activities that would keep us entertained."

A group of boys crowd around a pool table to socialize and shoot a little eight-ball.

"We rule," says James Bush, 12, a Power seventh grader. "I'd be watching TV otherwise. I've been here every day except Wednesday."

The program starts late enough

in the afternoon that it doesn't usually interfere with the senior programs in place, Lipa said. And those few seniors who were still at the center didn't seem to mind having the younger set around.

"I'm just glad to see them enjoying themselves," said one woman as she walked by the pool room.

Lipa, who is also active in the Special Olympics program, said he isn't surprised that the kids are enjoying the program.

"We went to the schools and they seemed interested right away," he said. "And since it is really their program, they are going to decide what activities they want."

Lipa did a lot of last minute shopping for video games and has

been able to get food and beverage vendors to give the program price breaks so that no food or snack item costs more than 60 cents.

The program is still looking for volunteers and also employs high school and college students part-time.

The program's goal is to keep kids occupied in constructive social activities. That, said Lipa, will keep them out of trouble and give them a sense of responsibility for their own program.

Lipa said the program will change as kids find new activities. But it will continue to attract them as long as they have a say.

"If it's not working, they're going to tell us how we should change it," he said. "I think it will continue to grow."

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