

Published May 27th, 2009

Arrest Made After Death of Miramonte Student

By Lee Borrowman

Joseph Loudon, a sixteen year-old sophomore at Miramonte High School and member of the school's track and football teams, was pronounced dead at midnight Saturday, May 23rd at Kaiser Medical Center in Walnut Creek. Loudon had reportedly been binge-drinking at a party near his home on Hillcrest Drive when he was found by friends, unconscious in a hallway. Police say that alcohol poisoning is the likely cause of the young man's death.

□ "There were massive quantities of alcohol at this party," said Orinda Police Chief William French. Police did not find any drugs on the premises.

□ According to French, the owners of the home in which the party was held were out of town, several hours away, on Saturday night. The party was hosted by two people, age eighteen and nineteen years old. 18-year old Patrick Gabrielli, a junior at Miramonte, was arrested on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and giving alcohol to a minor. He was subsequently released on \$5,000 bail.

□ French would not say if there would be other arrests but confirmed that there is an ongoing investigation. "That's what we're doing today," he said Monday, "conducting more interviews, trying to find out if there were (additional people) responsible." There were only about a dozen people in the house when police and paramedics arrived. "It's usual for them to scatter when they hear sirens," said French, who would not say whether those who remained appeared to be intoxicated.

□ Why did this happen? French frequently raises the broader issue of the choices that we as a community make as to how we address the issue of teenage drinking; whether we look the other way or even allow teens to drink in our homes because 'they're going to do it anyway.' On Monday morning he added, "Everyone makes an individual choice. There was no indication of forced drinking, no hazing. Even at sixteen, you make choices. The suspect also made a conscious choice to host the party. He bears some responsibility for what happened."

□ According to the Centers for Disease Control, 45% of teenagers drink alcohol, and of those who drink, 64% admit to binge-drinking.

□ Anyone with information about Loudon's death is urged to contact the Police at 284-5010.

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