

Slain Student Identified

Murugiah was not well-known to others as he'd recently transferred to Winston Churchill from Marc Garneau

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Dineshkumar Murugiah was on his way to lunch with a group of friends before he was fatally stabbed just outside Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute over the noon hour yesterday, a homicide detective said this afternoon.

The 16-year-old was chatting with his friends in the laneway that connects the Lawrence Ave. and Kennedy Rd. school with Flora Dr. when a person walked up to them, homicide Det.-Sgt. Gary Grinton said.

"There was a confrontation in which this person brandished a knife and several of the deceased's friends fled," Grinton said.

Murugiah and the individual began fighting and both fell to the ground. At some point, he was stabbed in his chest, though police are waiting for post-mortem results tomorrow to confirm that, Grinton said.

The suspect hopped in the passenger side of a four-door, blue, mid-1990s Honda Civic, which sped southbound on Flora.

"(Murugiah) was able to get to his feet and collapsed almost immediately," Grinton said.

The one friend left with him tried to revive him with CPR and called 911 as another bystander tried to help. Murugiah was pronounced dead at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre shortly after.

"We have a lot of information. We have some very good leads. And we are making progress," Grinton said in regards to his hunt for the suspect.

Murugiah's friends have been very co-operative with police, who have talked to several other people who have come forward with information, Grinton said. Further witnesses are still urged to call police with any information.

"You might have that little bit that will push us over the edge," he said.

Grinton said investigators believe Murugiah was targeted, but he brushed aside suggestions the student had previously been in trouble.

"I can tell you he's a young man who was at school doing absolutely nothing wrong," Grinton said.

"Let's keep our eye on the ball here, folks. This young man was going for lunch — and he was killed."

The killing is the second in recent months involving a Toronto high school student.

In May, 15-year-old Jordan Manners was shot to death inside C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute, prompting an outcry over school safety and gun control.

Students arrived at Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute this morning with mixed emotions and mixed feelings of security.

"I feel like I don't want that to happen to me," said Joshua Rampersaud, who was feeling "pretty scared" following the death of the 16-year-old boy.

"My parents are really scared about this case," said Zahra Abdy.

Most students said they had never heard of Murugiah, who arrived at the school last week. He used to attend Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute near Don Mills Rd. and Overlea Blvd.

"It's tragic," 16-year-old Saad Rahman said, adding "these things happen."

"It's becoming a common thing in Toronto. Last year there were more stabbings. We had that night school stabbing," Rahman said, referring to an incident in April in which a student was stabbed behind the school.

Grade 11 student Melony Rasalingam said "it feels awkward" coming back to school following the stabbing.

"I kind of feel scared but I have to go to school and not be afraid," the 15-year-old said.

After meeting with student leaders in the morning, Toronto District School Board Director of Education Gerry Connelly said she was impressed with the quality of leadership coming from staff and students at the school.

"One of the things that the students said, which I have heard reiterated across the board, is that our students do not want our schools to be fortresses," Connelly said. "They want to be sure that their schools are safe. The onus is on all of us to build confidence in our system and ensure our schools are safe."

Sheryl Freeman, who is in her third year as principal since coming to the school eight years ago, said the school will continue programs that are designed to reach out to youth in the community.

"I would like to think that kids choose Churchill because it's a safe school," Freeman said. "I can appreciate that parents are worried. I am a parent. I'd be worried too."

Because the stabbing victim was not well known to students that does change the dynamic," said TDSB social worker Chitra Koneri, who has worked at the school for 10 years.

"I'm getting a sense that they (students) are quite, surprisingly, relaxed in the halls," said Koneri. "The atmosphere appears to be quite strong."

In the laneway where the stabbing took place, small scraps of yellow police tape lingered as the only reminders of what happened yesterday. The area was cordoned off as forensic investigators examined the scene where a pile of clothes, a pair of shoes, and two backpacks lay next to discarded blue paramedic gloves.