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THE SUNDAY HOUR ■

Gun victim's sister says police ove

By DIRK PERREFORT
 Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — The sister of a recent accidental shooting victim in the city said Saturday she is angry over how police handled the situation.

Dawn Vlicky, 20, is the sister of Michael Vlicky, 13, of Taylor Avenue, who was shot in the head on Thursday night by his 15-year-old friend while the two boys were playing with a gun they found in the attic of the friend's family.

The sister said her brother

and his friend found the gun and unloaded it but didn't realize there was still a bullet in the chamber.

"They both wanted to play with the gun and were fighting for it when the gun went off," she told *The Hour* during an interview Saturday. "When the police arrived they tackled Mike's friend to the ground and placed handcuffs and shackles on him."

She felt that the police response was inappropriate and that the friend, who was charged with first-degree

assault, should never have been arrested.

"There was no intent," she said. "It was both their faults. They were old enough to know not to play with guns."

Norwalk Police Chief Harry Rilling defended the actions of his officers.

"When officers respond to the scene of a shooting their first priority is to secure the scene, including the individual responsible," said Rilling, adding that nobody has suggested the incident was intentional. "The officer has to do

what is necessary to make sure the scene is safe for everyone involved."

The chief also said that the officers do not carry shackles and doubts the friend was placed in the device, which holds a prisoner's feet together.

He called the shooting "a terrible, terrible tragedy" and said that his officers' hearts are with both families affected by the incident.

Dawn Vlicky said her brother doesn't hold his friend responsible and told the friend during a visit to the hospital on

Friday that he loved him.

"Mike feels really bad friend," she said, adding she is also upset that the media is trying to make the friend look like a killer.

"If we can be understood then why can't the rest of the world," she asked. "Peop to stop and think about i kids feel."

She also disputed pu reports that the two boys were playing with the gun l they wanted to use it to date bullies.

Vlicky said the bullet

BREAKING POVERTY'S CHAINS

City natives reach out to help Guatemalans

By DIRK PERREFORT
 Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — Two Norwalk residents have dedicated much of their lives to helping impoverished children and families in Guatemala.

The country located in northern Central America bordering the southern edge of Mexico, suffers from an 85 percent poverty rate. More than 65 percent of the country's citizens can't read or write.

"The poverty most Guatemalans live in is severe, but for lasting change to occur it needs to be made by Guatemalans themselves," said Norwalk resident Julie Coyne, the founder of the Education and Hope foundation. "For me, the root of that change is education."

The non-profit foundation, operated solely by Coyne, provides scholarships to more than 100 children who ordinarily wouldn't be able to afford an education. It also provides after school tutoring and hot lunch daily for approximately 40 children from rural areas.

"Through education citizens in Guatemala can obtain the tools they need to break out of the poverty cycle," said Coyne, who first visited the county in the early 1980s as part of a language immersion program to learn Spanish.

"I was shocked by the number of families who couldn't afford to send their children to school," she said. "While public education in Guatemala is theoretically free, even public school students are required to pay relatively high registration fees, all material costs including text books, and any transportation costs."

She added that many families make sacrifices to send their children to public schools, which frequently offer a sub-standard level of education with overcrowded classrooms.

Coyne, who was fresh out of college and considering working toward a master's degree in social work or teaching at the time, decided to stay in Quetzaltenango, in the western highlands of

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Norwalk natives Pat Krause and Julie Coyne work to improve the lives of Guatemalan people.

Julie Coyne helps a group of Guatemalan students with their school work.



Contributed photo

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people looking for affordable apartments.

"Your heart breaks," Calabro said, whose five apartments are filled.

In Greenwich, poverty is largely concentrated in working class neighborhoods near the New York border.

Greenwich, which gained notoriety for trying to keep out-of-towners off its beaches and out-of-state lottery players off its streets, has operated public housing projects for decades.

One of the largest projects, Armstrong Court, built in 1951, is located on the opposite side of the railroad tracks from Belle Haven, one of Greenwich's wealthiest neighborhoods. Rows of dull brown buildings house hundreds of residents.

Bianca Jones, a 21-year-old resident who wore a Martin Luther King shirt as she watched her friend's baby one afternoon last week, said the residents are not all poor. Many have good-paying jobs at the nearby Arnold Bakery, while a growing number of Spanish-speaking immigrants have moved in and typically work in the estates of the wealthy, she said.

The disparities create an uneasy mix at times.

Jones, who is black, said Greenwich police have pulled her and her friends over while they were driving. At Greenwich High School, she said, there was a section where white students would gather and another section for black students.

"I used to walk all over the sections, I didn't care," Jones said. "We just act like we fit in."

Jones said she has tried unsuccessfully to find work in the ritzy stores of downtown Greenwich. One day she said she filled out a job application, but her white friend who came into the store as she was leaving wound up getting the job.

"They hired her right on the spot after I left," Jones said.

The heat was still more intense at a dry cleaners downtown where Andre Green pressed clothes in a basement with two immigrants from Haiti.

Green, a 61-year-old Stamford resident who is black, said that years ago minorities entered Greenwich at their own risk.

"There was a time if you went to Greenwich and your face was black, you'd better be going to someone's house," Green said. "The police department and people knew you didn't live here."

These days, Green said he feels less defensive walking around Greenwich. But he said he's generally ignored when he shops in the fancy stores.

"Sometimes I get the feeling I'm invisible," Green said. "It's almost like if you walk into the place they don't see you."

City women aid poor in Guatemala

►Continued from Page B1

Guatemala, and work on community projects in the area including a hot lunch program for children.

"The people in Guatemala are very warm, welcoming, and generous, despite their lack of means," said Coyne. "I'm often amazed at how much they need and how little they ask for. They are a simple and humble people."

When she returned home, several members of Coyne's church, St. Jerome's in Norwalk, approached her and asked if their was any way they could help support her efforts.

"That was the beginning," said Coyne. "I began to provide scholarships to a few students and paid for their medical expenses."

She began to assist several students with their education by enrolling them in private schools, which offer a better education than public schools and can cost as little as \$10 a month.

In 1997 Coyne received a large donation from a private contributor in the area that would fund a full year of her work in Guatemala.

"It was a major crossroads for me," said Coyne. "That was when I started Education and Hope."

The first year the foundation was organized it provided scholarships and medical assistance to 35 children. Today, less than five years later, the foundation provides scholarships and medical assistance for 115 children, four of which are already attending college.

"I think that every child deserves to be educated," said Coyne, who spends much of her time in Guatemala when she is not home raising much-needed funds for the foundation. "I believe that education is a fundamental human right."

In the future, Coyne hopes to construct an educational center in Quetzaltenango that would contain educational facilities, including arts programs integrated with a health clinic and a cafeteria.

"That's my dream," said Coyne, adding that the center could cost approximately \$100,000 to build. "But right now it's a lot of work just raising enough money every year to maintain the scholarship program."

She added that none of what she has done could have been possible without the support of Norwalk residents.

"This was a grassroots undertaking," she said. "The project never would have grown without the support I've received from this community. It's really a beautiful thing because residents here can see how their contributions directly affect a child's life."

Norwalk resident Pat Krause also expressed much



Julie Coyne, here working with some Guatemalan youngsters, believes education is the key to breaking out of poverty. She started a foundation to help Guatemalan kids enroll in private schools.

How to help

Donations are welcome by either organization and may be sent to:

Education with Hope
P.O. Box 436
Norwalk, CT 06855
Email:
esperanza@vefa.net.gt

Maya Works
4421 N. Malden, 3N
Chicago, IL 60640
Telephone: 773-506-2445
FAX: 773-506-4906
Email:
MayaWorks@mayaworks.org

appreciation for her friends and neighbors in the community who helped her to grow Maya Works, an organization that sells products made by women in Guatemala and sends the profits directly back to the people that made them.

Krause first visited the country in the 1970s as a volunteer with the Behrhorst health organization and returned several times in the next few decades.

"I had no idea that it would develop the course of my life in the future," she said, adding that she was put in charge of national fund development for the organization.

On a return trip to the country in 1990 a Guatemalan woman, Felipa Xico, gave Krause a stack of woven placemats she had made.

"Women need a marketplace," she told Krause. "They can weave, but there's no place to sell their goods."

Xico asked Krause if she could help, which she was more than happy to do.

"How could I resist," she said, adding that the placemats sold immediately upon her return home with help from members of the United Congregational Church.

Krause founded Maya Works

in 1995.

"The woven items were very popular because they were beautiful pieces at affordable prices and people knew the money was going back to the women that made them," she said.

Krause's house became her warehouse, her neighbors became volunteer shipping clerks, and friends as well as community members became sales representatives.

"It would never have grown without the support I received from the community," said Krause.

"Last year the project outgrew our house," she said, adding that the attic and the spare bedroom were filled with merchandise. "We moved the whole thing to Chicago where we hired a staff to help run the project. But it all started here in Norwalk."

Maya Works now employs more than 200 women in Guatemala and brought in more than \$250,000 in sales last year.

Krause also uses a portion of the profits to set up scholarship programs for children and micro-loans for women.

"Women in Guatemala are using these loans to develop productive projects," she said, adding that she has learned a great deal from the people in Guatemala over the years.

"Most of the Guatemalan women cook food over wood stoves rather than popping meals in the microwave; have floors of packed dirt rather than tile and carpeting; scrub clothes by hand rather than dropping them off at the cleaners; and even struggle to read and write their own language," Krause said.

"They taught me that poor is a relative term, and so much is rich," she continued. "What price would you put on family love and knowing that one is part of a community, personal dignity, and the value of working with one's hands. It is these priceless treasures which loom large for me when I am with women in Guatemala."

cash or personal check appointment is next. Additional immunizations are scheduled for 1 p.m. July 16 and p.m. Aug. 13 at the d

WWII vet to 1 experiences

WESTPORT — Al World War II veteran served on Okinawa, (the Philippines, will his experiences at 8 p Wednesday at the Pe Senior Center, Staples School, 70 North Ave.

Vintage auto display at be

NORWALK — The Parks and Recreation and Coachmen Custom will co-sponsor beach cruise from 6 t Wednesday at Calif P Beach. Cars ranging sics, muscle cars, pre street rods, antiques, will be on display. Th live music and trophy canned food drive wi St. Vincent DePaul.

Support group grieving pare

DARIEN — Center has a weekly support parents who lost an a from 8:15 to 7:45 p.m., Wednesday at the Cer Hope, 590 Post Road. (Greenberg, RN, LMP) rriage and family ther specializes in bereave who has lost a child h will facilitate. For info call 655-4833.

Foundation to summer prog

NORWALK — Geor Ingham Carver Found hold its summer C.A gram, as part of th Summer Camp progr

Services to take ov

►Continued from P conduct the newer, ized testing, which co ate more income, Fox

Fox said his g received almost no in about how the ne would work or how \$20 testing fee woul between Agbar and ing stations. He said t the company were to the entire fee, stations money if they were dedicate a garage ba consuming treadmill "You'd either hav the fee or change th guarantee a profit, B Seymour said the give out specifics to (garages until a cor Agbar is completa Agbar is confident t