



## Oxnard community rallies around slain woman's children

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Truckloads of items were donated Thursday evening to six Oxnard children whose mother was shot and killed two weeks earlier in what police say was an act of domestic violence.

Across the street from the house where the incident occurred, community members gathered to show their support for the family. The Oxnard Police Department held a community check-in to listen to any safety concerns from neighbors following the Jan. 5 homicide. The agency also wanted to give them access to counseling services and allow them a place to donate to the victim's children.

Officer Martin Perez, who is assigned to work the Colonia neighborhood, said after a major investigation wraps up the police leave and often never come back to answer some of these questions.

"This is about us trying to make ourselves available," Perez said. "...I'd want this done for me if I lived down the street."

Police said the children, three boys and three girls ranging from age 2 to 16, were at their home in the 100 block of North Juanita Avenue that morning when their father Alfredo Ortiz, 33, shot and killed their mother, Teresa Ortiz, 37. Their father fled the scene but was found in a citrus orchard the next day in the Somis area. He was charged with first-degree murder on Jan. 10.

David Avila, who lives next door, was at the event Thursday and said he was worried that Ortiz may come back to the area.

"I'm not gonna lie. The second day was kind of rough," Avila said.

Some of the people at the event just stopped by to drop off items for the children.

"We brought cereal, clothing, pajamas, wipes, stuffed animals," said Darlene Byrd. "I wanted to show my grandson too that you should help the community whenever you can."

Both Avila and fellow Colonia resident Ramon Lopez said the atmosphere changed in the neighborhood since the homicide occurred. However, they remain committed to making sure the community rallies around the children and their caregiver. Lopez said he has met the children, and they are being cared for by a family member.

"I think that also gives a lot of people peace knowing that they're all together," said Melissa Valdez, Oxnard police's community affairs manager.

Valdez said about 20 bags of clothing were dropped off at the police station in the days before the event. Officials will continue to accept donations on an ongoing basis, she said.

Meanwhile, Avila and Lopez, who are both members of local car clubs, are trying to work with the city to put on a car show at the park across the street from the former Ortiz home and hold the event in Teresa Ortiz's memory. They also want to raise awareness about domestic violence.

Organizations that provide services for victims of domestic violence and other kinds of abuse were also there to provide support to the community. Officials with the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, working at a table where kids played with coloring books, said they were offering advice to parents whose kids might be scared or traumatized after the Jan. 5 incident.

Interface Children & Family Services, Coalition for Family Harmony and Foster VC Kids were also on hand to answer questions.

Perez said the children in the neighborhood were a significant concern when putting together the event since there are many schools and parks in the area.

"I want to remove that fear (and) that this wasn't targeted at kids," he said. "I want people to feel safe."

<http://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/oxnard/2017/01/20/oxnard-community-rallies-around-slain-womans-children/96692660/>