



St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



Media Relations Office
Bill Proffitt
Mike Puetz

Voice 727-893-7550
Fax 727-893-7773
Media Line 727-893-7878

For Immediate Release

October 21, 2011

Update re. Drowning Death of One Year Old Child

Victim: Mark Andrew Van Cott, W/M DOB 10/27/2009 of 2617 47 Avenue North St. Petersburg

Parents: Mark Van Cott W/M 08/21/74 and Heather Van Cott, W/F 11/04/81 both reside at 2616 47 Avenue North

At about 6:05 p.m. yesterday, police and paramedics responded to 883 Addison Drive SE regarding the report of a drown child. Upon arrival they found the victim child lying near the shoreline of a small lake behind that address.

The victim's grandmother, Josefa Van Cott, W/F, 05/08/47, was attempting to perform CPR on the child as paramedics took over. The victim was transported to All Children's Hospital where he was subsequently pronounced deceased.

Investigators learned the child had been dropped off at the residence earlier in the day by the parents while they went to attend to a school issue for their other child. The home is that of the child paternal grandmother, Josefa Van Cott, and his step grandfather, Victor Lopez W/M, 07/18/60. Mr. Lopez's nephew, Victor Hernandez, 05/03/83 was also at the home at the time.

According to them they were preparing dinner and the victim was playing inside the house when they suddenly noticed they did not see him any longer and began to search about the residence looking for him.

Mr. Lopez eventually went out to the backyard to search when he saw the child lying face down in the lake, about one foot from the shore line. He extracted the child and yelled for the others to call 911. They all began resuscitation efforts until paramedic arrived.

Homicide investigators responded to the scene and believe that the child made his way out of the house through an open sliding glass door out on to a screened in back porch. He then managed to push open a screen door which appears to have a faulty latch and was not secured.

From the point, the child made his way to the lake which is a distance of about 60 feet from the house.

The family estimated that child was not out for the sight for no more the five minutes prior to the child being discovered in the lake.

Investigators advise that at this point, the incident appears to be no more than a tragic accident and no criminal charges are anticipated.

Information released by Mike Puetz