

Survivor's condition improving after accident kills three

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 01 November 2012 14:12 -



A loving and giving person is how one family member describes 45-year-old Elaine Grasz who was killed Thursday morning west of Maxwell.

Following a collision on an icy Highway 30 overpass, Elaine and two Brady school students—Conner Gentry, 14, and his brother, Colten, 10, of North Platte—died when their cars collided.

The brothers were described as full of energy and who loved to have fun, according to Brady principal Bruce Hird.

Elaine's 46-year-old husband, Terry, who was in critical condition following the accident, is now stable and improving, according to his sister-in-law Jeannine Davis of Brady.

According to the Lincoln County's sheriff's office, Terry and Elaine were westbound in a 1994 Chevrolet Lumina and on their way to work in North Platte.

The Gentry brothers, in a 1999 Kia Sportage, were eastbound and on their way to school in Brady.

Conner, who had a student permit, was driving when the Kia hit ice and he lost control, investigators said. The car slid into the westbound lane on top of the railroad overpass where it struck the Lumina driven by Terry.



Terry was taken to Great Plains Regional Medical Center and later airlifted to Bryan LGH West where he underwent surgery.

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Later, Terry was transferred to Saint Elizabeth Regional Burn and Wound Care Center.

Deputies responded to the accident at 7:22 a.m.

Both vehicles appeared to be traveling below or at highway speed, the sheriff's office said.

After the collision, the sheriff's office said Terry—with the help of other motorists—got out of the burning vehicle—and was transported to a hospital.

Officials said alcohol was not a factor in the crash and it was unknown if seat belts were in use.

Cards and letters can be sent to Terry at: Saint Elizabeth Regional Burn and Wound Care Center, 555 South 70th Street, Lincoln, NE, 68510.

Davis said a trust account to help with medical expenses for Terry and traveling expenses for the family has been set up at Gothenburg State Bank under the Grasz name.

She added that everything Elaine did “was to glorify God,” noting that her sister-in-law volunteered for multiple community events such as the Lions Club, Brady youth sports, operated the score clock at basketball games for many years and led services at Svea Dahl Church which the family attended.

Services for Elaine are pending. A memorial service for the Gentry brothers was Tuesday at the Brady High School gymnasium. An obituary for the brothers appears on page A6.

Hird said students and teachers are devastated about the deaths.

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Both Gentry boys were good students and brought much to the classroom, he said.

“Conner was kind of ornery but was kind and good and had many positive and good qualities,” Hird said. “Colten was as sweet a kid as you’re ever going to know and tender hearted.”

Dealing with the deaths continues to be tough, he said, but “we’re getting through it.”

Following the accident, counselors were brought in from schools in Gothenburg, Hershey, Eustis-Farnam, Maxwell and Educational Service Unit 10 in North Platte, Hird said. Pastors from Brady and neighboring churches also offered support.

A counselor from Stapleton was available at the school Wednesday (today).