

AURORA THEATER SHOOTINGS. THE MEMORIAL



The families, bottom center, arrive at the prayer vigil for the victims of the Century Aurora 16 theater shootings at the Aurora Municipal Center campus in Aurora on Sunday. *Joe Amon, The Denver Post*

“A BRIGHTER DAY IS GOING TO COME”

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AURORA — Gathered shoulder-to-shoulder, leaning forward on tiptoes, overflowing onto sidewalks and into parking lots, a crowd of thousands converged Sunday evening at the Aurora Municipal Center to stand as one.

At a vigil to honor the victims of the Century Aurora 16 theater shootings, the scenes in the crowd spoke to the respect of the moment.

Little girls carried bouquets of flowers. Small boys in scout uniforms stood self-consciously upright. Adults applauded when Aurora police officers walked by. Most had no personal reason to be there, other than to prove that Aurora — sprawling, diverse, complicated Aurora — is a com-

munity united following the tragedy.

“I just wanted to come and pay my respects,” said Greg Durfee, who said he lives in Denver but considers Aurora to be his hometown. “I think this is the start of the healing.”

“When something tragic and horrific like this happens,” said Bill Stanley, who, along with his wife, Colleen, traveled from Wheat Ridge for the vigil, “it hurts the whole metro-area region. I just wanted to pay respects to the victims, the families, the police officers, just everyone who had to deal directly with this sad event.”

The vigil featured speeches by Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan and Gov. John Hickenlooper, as well as several religious leaders.

Hogan spoke of refusing to allow the tragedy to define the city. Hickenlooper told stories of heroism amid the attack: of an Aurora police officer who drove six wounded victims to the hospital in his patrol car, of a woman outside the theater who used a belt to apply a tourniquet to a stranger’s wounds.

“The outpouring of light and love,” Hickenlooper said one shooting survivor told him, “is so much more powerful than any darkness.”

As Hickenlooper read the names of the 12 killed in the shooting, the crowd shouted, “We will remember” after each one.

AnneMarie Rossi of Denver came to the vigil with her daughter Malia, 12, and 9 year-old son Kaden. All three carried signs that read, “One Love Colorado. Share the Love.”

“I wanted my kids to come so I could teach them that the only way to fight evil is to do good,” Rossi said.

Which is just what Mary Lenhart did as she entered the lawn where the vigil was taking place. She stopped to say thanks to a group of eight Aurora

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Advisement hearing. James Eagan Holmes, 24, suspected of killing 12 people and wounding 58 others in an Aurora movie theater, is to be advised of charges against him in Arapahoe County court in Centennial at 12:30 a.m. Monday.

Obama: “Good people,” not shooter, will be remembered

By Allison Sherry The Denver Post

AURORA President Barack Obama spent more than two private hours with injured victims and families at University of Colorado Hospital on Sunday evening before saying in a televised address that it will be the “good people” and the heroic acts that will be remembered in the theater shootings — not the alleged gunman.

Solemn, flanked by seven-faced Colorado politicians and Aurora Police Chief Dan Oates, Obama spoke to reporters at the hospital for about nine minutes before taking off for a series of campaign events on the West Coast.

He quoted a passage from the Bible’s book of Revelation that says, in part, that God “will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.”

Obama said he came to the victims and the families “not so much as president as I do as a father and as a husband.”

The nightmarish, surreal story of what took



At a speech Sunday, President Obama shows how Stephanie Davies saved her friend Allie Young’s life by holding pressure on her neck after she was shot. 17 **OBAMA** 16A

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police officers standing nearby.

“They put their lives on the line every day. And what they had to see at that theater is just too much to comprehend,” Lenhart said, her voice cracking with emotion. “I just had to let them know how much they mean to everyone. I’m so grateful for them.”

Sgt. Steve White, one of the officers Lenhart thanked — and who was among the officers called to the theater Friday after the shooting — said he appreciated the support.

“It’s just a senseless act,” White said. “These past few days have just been overwhelming.”

Kronda Seibert wore a T-shirt with a Batman logo on it. At her feet was a homemade sign depicting a silhouette of Batman, bowing with sunken shoulders in front of a remembrance ribbon.

“There’s a little bit of Batman in all of us,” said Seibert, who is from Aurora and knows friends of friends affected by the tragedy. “We all have the ability to rise above what has happened to us and become heroes.”

Family members of Micayla Medek, one of the Aurora theater shooting victims, comfort one another at the community vigil Sunday at the Aurora Municipal Center. A crowd of thousands paid their respects at the vigil, some carrying homemade signs decorated with prayers and inspirational messages. *Aaron Ontiveroz, The Denver Post*



Then there was 11-year-old Byron Allen, who held a sign saying, “Real heroes don’t wear capes.” His mother, Jennifer Allen, said she and Byron go to the movies at the Century Aurora 16 theater at least twice a month.

“I’m here,” Byron said, “because there’s this little 6-year-old girl, and I feel bad this person killed her. I’m also giving her a puppy, a stuffed dog.”

The vigil closed as the sun slipped from beneath a cloud and dropped below the mountains with the crowd singing “Amazing Grace” in unison.

After a vigil of tears and hugs, cheers and harmony, it seemed only one thing remained unsaid: the name of the shooting suspect.

People overcome with emotion comfort each other Sunday at a memorial for the 12 people who died after a gunman opened fire inside a movie theater in Aurora on Friday. The memorial is at the corner of East Centrepointe Drive and South Sable Boulevard in Aurora. *Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post*