

# THE VICTIMS

## Courant Staff Reports

Killed in Friday's horrific shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School were 20 children, ages 6 and 7, and six adults. The shooter's mother was also killed Friday. Stories of the adult heroes of this tragedy and tributes to the children who lost their lives are being shared on Facebook and Twitter, by the families and in obituaries. Following are reports about the victims, gathered from news sources and Courant reporters.

## Charlotte Bacon, Age 6

They were supposed to be for the holidays, but finally on Friday, after



hearing much begging, Charlotte Bacon's mother relented and let her wear the new pink dress and boots to school.

It was the last outfit the outgoing redhead would ever pick out. Charlotte's older brother, Guy, was also in the school but was not shot.

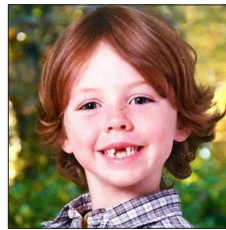
Her parents, JoAnn and Joel, have lived in Newtown for four or five years, JoAnn's brother John Hagen, of Nisswa, Minn., told Newsday.

"She was going to go some places in this world," Hagen told the newspaper. "This little girl could light up the room for anyone."

-- Associated Press

## Daniel Barden, Age 7

Daniel Barden was a first-grader and



beloved youngest son of a doting mother and father, according to friends and neighbors.

His parents tried to keep their children active, shuttling Daniel off to swim practice and other activities.

"This is warm, loving family," said a co-worker of Jackie Barden, Daniel's mother. "The kids were the type of kids parents want their children to be around: warm and wonderful and caring and kind. This is heartbreaking."

Jackie Barden had unique insights into her son's school life. She is a second-grade teacher at Pawling Elementary School in New York and also worked as a reading specialist for middle-schoolers. When news of Friday's shootings spread, Jackie left work. A co-worker drove her back to Connecticut, where she learned about the loss of her son.

Her husband, Mark Barden, is a local rock guitarist who entertains diners with his skills at Proud Mary's, a local bar, according to Javier Mendizabal, who works

there. A forum was set up on a message board called thegearpage.net to offer condolences. One man referred to Mark as a “kind, gentle and humble man, as well as one of the most talented guitarists I know.”

On Saturday, friends and family gathered in Sandy Hook to visit the mourning parents and their two older children, a boy and a girl. A family member who answered the phone said that the Bardens were not ready to speak publicly, but that they were “not good.”

Their love for their children was apparent to neighbors who did not know them well. For Peter Bernson, one image stood out: The small, laughing, brown-haired boy hoisted atop his father’s shoulders, heading to the bus stop for school every morning.

-- Washington Post

## Rachel D’Avino, Age 29

Rachel D’Avino was pursuing a dream of helping and serving others when she lost her life during the Newtown shootings.



At Sandy Hook School, D’Avino was an intern, offering one-on-one instruction to a child with special needs.

She was a student at University of St. Joseph, where she was pursuing a graduate certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Those who knew her at the school remember her fondly, as both a professional and passionate young woman eager to work with children. One of her professors, Deirdre Fitzgerald, described her as a dynamic individual, respected by her peers

and full of potential.

“She was a leading force in the group,” said Fitzgerald in a statement. “She just sparked with ideas and potential.”

She had been an intern at Sandy Hook for just over a week, according to an interview Fox 13 News in Tampa Bay had with Pastor Ken Whitten, the senior pastor at D’Avino’s aunt’s church in Lutz, Fla.

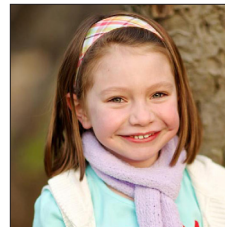
Whitten said D’Avino’s aunt, Christine Carmody, is feeling pain over her loss. Carmody told him that D’Avino’s boyfriend had just asked her parents for her hand in marriage and was planning to propose on Christmas Eve.

“We will pray especially for Christine,” Whitten added. “But we’ll be praying for all of the victims of this senseless tragedy.”

-- Jenny Wilson

## Olivia Rose Engel, Age 6

On the “Friends of the Engel Family Fund” Facebook page, there were photos



of Olivia Rose Engel, 6, sitting behind the steering wheel of a boat with sunglasses, smiling. Another showed her wearing a set of wings, holding a golden star over her head.

Friends and family members said Olivia was a wonderful big sister to her 3 1/2-year-old brother, loved school and was looking forward to a full week of Christmas crafts. The energetic girl took ballet and music lessons, loved to play with the family dog, Petey, liked pink and purple and was active in the St. Rose of Lima Church in town -- where she was to be an angel in the Nativity play that had been scheduled for

Saturday night.

The Facebook page, posted at 11 a.m. Saturday to honor Olivia and raise money for the family, had 4,000 likes by mid-evening.

A family member serving as spokesman for Olivia's parents, Brian and Shannon Engel, said he had been communicating with the family by text messages since Saturday, asking what he and other could do to help.

"It's the same message," John Engel said. "Just pray for us."

-- Kenneth R. Gosselin

## Josephine Gay, Age 7

Josephine Gay celebrated her seventh birthday on Tuesday.



In a photo circulating on the Internet, Josephine peeked out from under a green, toy traffic cone, smiling with her glasses perched on the tip of her nose.

On Sunday, a representative for the family was unable to speak to the media and said that the family's lawyer would release a statement.

A message on a Facebook tribute page for Josephine read: "Rest in peace beautiful angel. Watch over your family and help them stay strong."

-- Brian Dowling

## Dawn L. Hochsprung, Age 47

Praised as a model educator, Dawn Hochsprung was hired to lead Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2010.

Mary Ann Jacob, a clerk in the library,



said Hochsprung was a friend and "a really amazing woman and a great leader."

"This is a huge loss," Jacob told reporters Saturday in Newtown.

"We had a book fair a few weeks ago and she dressed up as the reading fairy and had a dress on with lights on it, and went around the classroom putting reading fairy dust on all the kids. She was just an amazing woman."

She added: "She was strong and fun, and the kids loved her. She was a wonderful woman. When you think about how our school is going to recover, you think about it needing leadership, and she was the person who most could have done that."

At the start of this school year at Sandy Hook, which has students from kindergarten through fourth grade, she told the Newtown Bee that she was "really excited about bringing a readers workshop into the mainstream of the program. ... We capitalize on [students'] love of reading and use that passion to advance their achievement."

At the start of the school year, Hochsprung wrote a letter to parents about the new security system that had been installed at the school.

-- Kenneth R. Gosselin

## Dylan Hockley, Age 6



Dylan Hockley smiles online in a series of family photos. He's Shrek, his mom writes. Or he's "Super Dylan" -- posed in a Superman

outfit. In other images, he poses with his brother, Jake.

According to news outlets in Great Britain, Dylan Hockley was born in Winchester, England, and his family moved from that country to Newtown in 2011. According to those reports, his father is a native of Great Britain while his mother is American. Dylan's older brother was also a student at the school.

Dylan had lived across Yogananda Street from where the violence began. His neighbor, Nancy Lanza, was the mother of the suspected shooter -- and apparently the first person killed Friday.

-- Ken Byron; Washington Post

## Madeleine F. Hsu, Age 6

Physician Matthew Velsmid was at 6-year-old Madeleine Hsu's house on



Saturday, tending to her stricken family. He said the family did not want to comment.

Velsmid said that after hearing of the shooting, he went to the triage area to provide medical

assistance but there were no injuries to treat.

"We were waiting for casualties to come out and there was nothing. There was no need, unfortunately," he said. "This is the darkest thing I've ever walked into by far."

Velsmid's daughter, who attends another school, lost three of her friends.

-- Associated Press

## Catherine V. Hubbard, Age 6

Catherine Violet Hubbard was described



as having a passion for animals and in an obituary that was released on Sunday her family asked that donations in her memory be made to the Newtown

Animal Shelter.

Catherine was born June 8, 2006, and is survived by her older brother, Frederick William; her parents Matthew and Jennifer; her grandparents Susan and Leo Sullivan and her great-grandmother Geraldine Russell Holden, all of West Chester, Pa.; Nancy and Earl Hubbard of Chatham, Mass., along with four uncles, four aunts, and nine cousins survive Catherine.

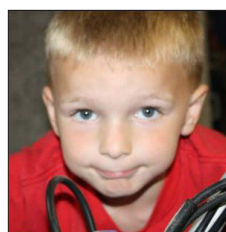
Matthew and Jennifer Hubbard could not be reached for comment but in a statement her parents released that has been circulated widely they asked for privacy but also thanked people in the community for their support and the work of police and other emergency responders.

"Her family prays that she, all the students of Sandy Hook Elementary, and all those affected by this brutal event find peace in their hearts," the family said in the obituary.

-- Ken Byron

## Chase Kowalski, Age 7

Chase Kowalski loved to be outside riding his bicycle, running or playing



baseball, according to his family and neighbors.

He competed in his first triathlon at age 6, according to his obituary. He was a Cub Scout, and



was a “fun loving energetic boy that had a true love of life.”

Chase’s family “sends their prayers and thoughts to all of the families involved with this horrific event,” the obituary said.

Just last week, he was visiting neighbor Kevin Grimes, telling him about completing -- and winning -- his first mini-triathlon.

“You couldn’t think of a better child,” Grimes said.

Grimes’ own five children all attended Sandy Hook, too. Cars lined up outside the Kowalskis’ ranch home Saturday, and a state trooper’s car idled in the driveway. Grimes spoke of the boy only in the present tense.

-- Shawn Beals

## Nancy Lanza, Age 52

Nancy Lanza, the mother of shooter Adam Lanza, was killed Friday morning before her son shot his way into the Sandy Hook School



According to published reports, Lanza had grown up in New Hampshire, where her brother was a longtime police officer. Officials in Kingston, N.H., described her as a

kind, considerate and loving person.

Lanza and her former husband, Peter Lanza, were divorced in 2009, according to court records.

It was not clear what Lanza did for a living, and according to reports she was not working at the time of the shooting.

Friends and neighbors in Newtown said Lanza was a kind woman with a good sense of humor who participated in events like Labor Day parades. According to reports,

Lanza was interested in gardening and took a special interest in Christmas lights. She was also a member a group of women who met regularly to play bunco, a dice game.

The Lanzas lived on Yogananda Street, a hilly, affluent neighborhood in the east of town.

--Ken Byron, Brian Dowling

## Jesse Lewis, Age 6

Kevin Samoskevich works in construction in Shelton and he often ran into Neil Heslin, a fellow building contractor, at the Dew Drop Donut shop in

town. They’d exchange pleasantries over coffee and talk about available construction work.

Heslin’s son, Jesse Lewis, a happy 6-year-old, was always beside him.

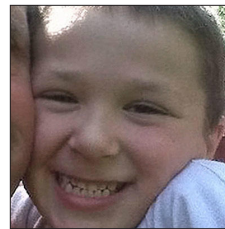
“He’s a very nice guy, a very friendly man and always helpful,” Samoskevich said. “We’re all so shocked. I have his Facebook page up in front of me and I don’t know what to write.”

Jesse Lewis died in the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary. Heslin always brought his son with him to job sites during his construction work, Samoskevich said.

“He was a happy child,” Samoskevich said. “A typical boy who was always in and out of things,” on the job sites.

Samoskevich said the tragedy has had a deep impact in the Newtown area and surrounding communities.

“People are very upset here. They’re numb. There’s no happy smiles on anybody’s faces,” Samoskevich said.



“People are crying.”

-- Washington Post

album, “Mission Statement.”

-- Donna Larcen, Owen McNally, Brian Dowling

## Ana Grace Marquez-Greene, Age 6

Ana Grace Marquez-Greene died in the shootings while her older brother, Isaiah, also at the school, escaped harm. She is the daughter of jazz musician and teacher



Jimmy Greene, 37, and his wife, Nelba Marquez Greene.

“She never walked anywhere,” the family said in a statement Sunday evening. “Her mode of transportation

was dance.”

The couple, high school sweethearts, told The Courant in May that they chose Newtown because it was close to Greene’s job and to the music scene in New York City, where Greene is in demand as a saxophone and flute player, and as a composer and arranger. Their remembrance of Ana Grace recalled the girl’s musical gifts of melody and rhythm. “Ana’s love for singing was evident before she was even able to talk.”

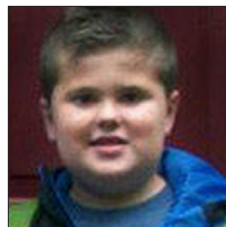
Jimmy and Nelba Greene said that their daughter strengthened them through her love and generosity – noting that Ana would often leave love notes under their pillows “not on special occasions, but, rather, on ordinary days.”

When Ana’s parents would bend down to kiss her, she would step back and pucker her lips, making it clear that she wanted to do the kissing, her parents said.

In 2009, Jimmy Greene included a song, “Ana Grace,” about his daughter on the

## James Mattioli, Age 6

James Mattioli, known to many simply as “J,” loved life until it was tragically ended on Friday, was a smart, active boy who looked up to -- and was like -- his father, played sports and loved food, an obituary



posted online through a Monroe funeral home said.

“I need to go outside, Mom. I need fresh air,” the family recalled James saying often. He loved

baseball, basketball swimming and arm wrestling. He and his cousin George played hockey together.

The 6-year-old “proudly” rode his bike without training wheels, his family said.

His family, through the obituary, said that James was born four weeks early at Bridgeport Hospital. It became a joke that his early birth was caused by the fact that he was hungry. James loved hamburgers, omelets with bacon and French toast. When visiting Subway with his parents, he’s once asked how old he would have to be to order a foot-long sub.

He was the first one up in the morning, and would draw and do crafts with his older sister, Anna.

Math and numbers came quickly to James. A friend, Christopher, introduced him to the concept of a googolplex, a number so large it’s physically impossible to write.

-- Brian Dowling

## Grace McDonnell, Age 7

Chris, Lynn and Jack McDonnell, the parents and older brother of Grace McDonnell, sent in a short statement to The Washington Post: “We are overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support from so many people. Our daughter Grace was the love and light of our family. Words cannot adequately express our sense of loss.”



The Werdens, who live across the street from the McDonnells, shared a school bus stop. And so, on many mornings, the Werdens saw Grace’s father, Christopher McDonnell, a competitive runner, out for jog.

“It’s heartbreaking, just heartbreaking,” Todd Werden said. “It’s just unfathomable.”

Werden described Grace as “a real cute little blond girl with blue eyes -- a real little doll.”

The McDonnell family residence was still brightly decorated for the holidays.

“Last night it was all ablaze with Christmas lights,” Werden said.

The Werdens also live close to the home of the shooter, who also apparently shot his mother several times in the head before he went to the Sandy Hook School Friday morning.

“If he was pissed at his family, why did he feel like he needed to go to the school and kill all those kids?” Werden said. “I can’t understand it. Nobody will be able to understand it.”

-- Washington Post

## Anne Marie Murphy, Age 52

Remembering their daughter, Murphy’s parents had no shortage of adjectives to offer the Long Island newspaper Newsday. A happy soul. A good mother, wife and daughter. Artistic, fun-loving, witty and hardworking.



When news of the shooting broke, Hugh and Alice McGowan waited for word of their daughter as hour by hour ticked by. And then it came.

Authorities told the couple their daughter was a hero who helped shield some of her students from the rain of bullets. Murphy was a special education teacher. As the grim news arrived, the victim’s mother reached for her rosary.

“You don’t expect your daughter to be murdered,” her father told the newspaper. “It happens on TV. It happens elsewhere.”

-- Associated Press

## Emilie Parker, Age 6

Emilie Parker was a “bright,” avid artist who acted as a mentor to her 3- and 4-year-old sisters, her father, Robbie Parker, recalled Saturday.



“Emily’s laughter was infectious and all those who met her would agree this world is a better place because she has been in it,” Parker, 30, told reporters in Newtown. “She was beautiful; she was blond, always smiling. She was the type of



person that could just light up a room.”

Emilie taught her younger sisters to read, dance and “find the simple joys of life,” Parker said. Her siblings looked up to her and leaned on her for comfort.

Emilie was compassionate, Parker said, and loved to create cards for others. One “special card” she made was even placed in her grandfather’s casket.

“She always had something kind to say about anybody, and her love and the strength she gave us and the example she showed us is remarkable,” he said.

The last conversation Parker said he had with Emilie was Friday morning, in Portuguese. He had been teaching her the language.

“I was leaving for work,” he said. “She told me good morning. She asked how I was doing. ... She told me she loved me. I gave her a kiss and I was out the door.”

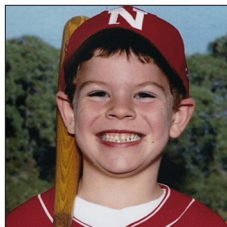
Parker expressed sympathy for the other families and said he’s sought strength through his family and his faith.

“She is an incredible person,” he said of Emilie, “and I’m so blessed to be her dad.”

-- Jenna Carlesso

## Jack Pinto, Age 6

He was a Giants fan and a wrestler. Jack Pinto, who was killed Friday at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, became the hero of his sports idol, Giant’s receiver Victor Cruz.



“Jack Pinto ‘My Hero,’  
“Cruz wrote in Sharpie across his cleats Sunday.  
“This one is 4 U!”

Cruz, who heard that Jack was a big fan of his, tweeted on Sunday that that his

condolences and prayers are with the Pinto family.

A family friend of the Pinto’s contacted FOX CT’s Rich Coppola to see if he could get a photograph of Jack displayed during Sunday’s Giants game. The friend told Coppola that she heard that Cruz was hoping to attend Jack’s funeral.

“Jack was an incredibly loving and vivacious young boy, appreciated by all who knew him for his lively and giving spirit and steely determination,” read an obituary for Jack on The Newtown Bee’s website. “In life and in death, Jack will forever be remembered for the immeasurable joy he brought to all who had the pleasure of knowing him, a joy whose wide reach belied his six short years”

Also Sunday morning, Jack’s wrestling team paused for a moment of silence before their meet.

-- Brian Dowling

## Noah Pozner, Age 6

First-grader Noah Pozner attended Sandy Hook Elementary with his twin sister, Arielle, and an older sister, Sophia, 8. Like many twins, the Pozners had been assigned to different classes.



Arielle survived Friday’s rampage. Noah

did not.

Their older sister, Sophia, 8, was a Sandy Hook School student too.

Noah was a “rambunctious little maverick” who was “smart as a whip,” said his mother, Veronique, speaking through



a relative. He loved his family, his parents, his siblings and especially his twin, she said.

“He called her his best friend,” she said.

Rabbi Shaul Prayer of Adath Israel in Newtown said that Noah and his family belonged to his congregation and that he had spent much of Friday with the boy’s mother. “He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time,” Prayer said.

An inquisitive and “very warm” child, Noah liked to ask about how the world worked, recalled his uncle, Arthur Pozner, who saw Noah for Hanukkah in Brooklyn the Saturday before the shooting.

Noah asked him question after question, he recalled, at one point wondering about the digital display on the toaster oven.

“Is the toaster going to reach 10,000 degrees?” Noah asked his uncle.

“Ten thousand degrees would melt diamonds,” his uncle recalls telling him.

Arthur Pozner said Noah often seemed beyond his years. “For a 6-year-old, he was a very smart kid,” he said.

Another relative said Noah loved the Mario Brothers, and “everything was superheroes.” He adored animals. He loved reading.

Noah’s mother is a nurse, and his father, Leonard, works with computers. The family appreciated their charming old New England town and its strong schools, Arthur Pozner said.

“One of the reasons they moved there was the schools,” he said. “They were very good. And it was very safe.”

Arthur Pozner had seen his nephew more lately because his home in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn -- where Noah’s grandmother lives too -- was flooded after Hurricane Sandy, and Noah’s family came to visit a number of times.

He and his nephew had talked about the “Hobbit” movie, which Noah wanted to see.

Arthur Pozner said he talked to his brother, who is Noah’s father, Friday evening. The grieving father could not bear a long conversation, he said, but spoke of Noah’s sisters and asked: “What do I tell them?”

-- Washington Post

## Caroline Previdi, Age 6

Caroline Previdi once went by the nickname “Boo” because she looked like the girl character in the movie “Monsters, Inc.,” said one family friend, who declined to be named.



“She was a total sweetheart. She was adorable,” the family

friend said.

Another friend who lives in the Newtown area said Caroline loved gymnastics. “She was a spunky little girl. She had fire to her,” the woman said.

“It’s a warm, loving family,” said Catherina Mola, who lives across the street from the Previdis. “It’s senseless.”

“We’re a pretty close neighborhood,” Mola added.

On Saturday morning, before all the victims’ names became public, some who knew Caroline remembered her on Twitter. “R.I.P Caroline Previdi. You were a very sweet little girl and we will all miss you dearly. #PrayersForNewtown,” tweeted Paige Tremblay.

-- Brian Dowling; Washington Post

## Jessica Rekos, Age 6

In a pale pink polo dress, 6-year-old Jessica Rekos' grayish-blue eyes beam into the camera lens. Her arm is wrapped around her younger brother, who has the same eyes.



"They are absolute clones of you guys" says a Facebook friend, commenting on the photo

Jessica's mother, Krista Lehman Rekos, posted Nov. 9.

In another family photo taken from Cape Cod, she stands in the back with her hand on her mother's shoulder as her family sits in the sand.

Condolences poured in for the Rekos family, who posted photos of Jessica in her honor, including one where she is in the arms of a relative, wearing a princess's tiara.

In a statement to the Washington Post on Sunday, Jessica's parents Krista and Rich said their daughter "loved everything about horses."

"She devoted her free time to watching horse movies, reading horse books, drawing horses and writing stories about horses. We had promised her she could have her very own horse when she turned 10. She asked Santa for new cowgirl boots and a cowgirl hat," her parents said in the statement.

Jessica was the Rekos' first born and they said she enjoyed being the big sister to her two little brothers, Travis and Shane. Jessica loved doing research on Orca whales, one of her passions after seeing the movie "Free Willy" last year. In October, she got a chance to visit Sea World and see a live Orca. She spent time, her family said,

writing in her journals and making up stories.

Jessica, her family said, "started our family, and she was our rock."

"She had an answer for everything, she didn't miss a trick, and she outsmarted us every time," the statement said. "We called her our little CEO for the way she carefully thought out and planned everything. We cannot imagine our life without her. We are mourning her loss, sharing our beautiful memories we have of her, and trying to help her brother Travis understand why he can't play with his best friend. We are devastated, and our hearts are with the other families who are grieving as we are."

-- Washington Post



## Avielle Richman, Age 6

Avielle Richman was a student Sandy Hook School in Newtown. A message on a Facebook

tribute page for Richman says "Rest in peace, little one."

-- Courant Staff Report

## Lauren Rousseau, Age 30

Things were looking up for Lauren Rousseau this year: She had a new



boyfriend and she landed a permanent substitute teacher job at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

For years, Rousseau, 30, had worked as substitute teacher and now she was one her way in her career, one that Lauren had aspired to even before

she herself entered kindergarten.

“We will miss her terribly and will take comfort knowing that she had achieved that dream,” Teresa Rousseau, her mother, said.

Bill Leukhardt, Teresa Rousseau’s longtime partner, said Saturday that the family learned at home at 1 a.m. that Lauren had died. The family hasn’t been given any other information on the circumstances of her death, Leukhardt said.

“We’re at the numb stage right now,” said Leukhardt, a journalist at The Courant.

As a permanent substitute, Lauren Rousseau traveled from classroom to classroom as she was needed.

“We don’t know what put her in harm’s way,” Leukhardt said. “She didn’t have a set gig. We don’t know where she was. All we know is that she is dead.”

A graduate of the University of Connecticut, Lauren was an avid fan of the women’s basketball team, sometimes going to games.

“She was always on social media talking,” Leukhardt said. “She really liked going to Broadway shows.”

-- Kenneth R. Gosselin

## Mary Sherlach, Age 56



Sherlach had worked as the school psychologist at Sandy Hook Elementary School since 1994 and had served on numerous districtwide committees, including the conflict resolution committee, according to a biography on the Newtown Public Schools website.

Sherlach lived in Trumbull and was married with two adult daughters -- one a high school chorus teacher in New Jersey and the other a graduate student at Georgetown University. Sherlach wrote in the biography that she and her husband, Bill, enjoyed traveling and spending time at their lake house in the Finger Lakes in upstate New York. Her hobbies were gardening, reading and the theater.

“I truly enjoy working with the SHS staff, parents and children and am always ready to assist in problem solving, intervention and prevention,” she wrote.

-- Kenneth R. Gosselin

## Victoria Soto, Age 27

Victoria Soto was a first-grade teacher in Room 10 next to where the shooting began.



Soto hid her students, some in a bathroom. By thinking quickly, she is credited with saving the 15 or 16 children in her class.

Lanza, according to sources familiar with the investigation, walked in, shot her and went back into the hallway looking for another class. The source said there’s no doubt the suspect would have fired at more students if he had seen them.

By mid-afternoon, a Facebook page “RIP Sandy Hook Elementary School Children” had a post in memory of Soto with 7,572 likes by 11 a.m. “My heart goes out to your family for their heartbreak. You beautiful hero are now surrounded by the 20 little angels, little stars that now and forever will shine above us. RIP and thank you,” one of them read.



“I’m so proud of her. Because of what she did, there are parents who can have Christmas with their children,” childhood friend Jessica Zrallack said at a vigil outside Stratford town hall on Saturday, shivering in the middle of the somber crowd. “She’s a real hero. I wouldn’t have expected anything less of her. I don’t think there’s one person who could say anything bad about her.”

“We lost a very special person. She was living her dream -- she wanted to be a teacher, but look at the price she paid for it,” Zrallack said.

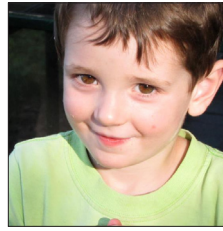
“She was always a good person. I remember her back to first grade. We were in the same class in fourth grade -- the Soto family was like a second family to me, and she was very family involved,” said Aquiles Rodriguez of New York City.

“When I heard about the shooting, I thought that was really bad. But when I heard the story that it was her,” Rodriguez said, pausing and looking to the ground. “When I heard it was her, I just got on the train to come up and be with the fam.”

-- Kenneth R. Gosselin, Don Stacom

## Benjamin Wheeler, Age 6

Benjamin Wheeler was “a very spirited boy,” said Rabbi Shaul Praver of Adath Israel in Newtown. He and his parents, David and Francine Wheeler, were



not members of the synagogue, but they attended its Hanukkah celebration.

“There’s always some brave individual who goes up to the dance floor to get everybody involved. That was Ben Wheeler,” he said. “Just delightful people.”

The Wheelers did not want to talk to the media Saturday, said a man who answered the phone at their home. The Episcopal bishops of Connecticut said the family were members of Trinity Episcopal Church of Newtown. A volunteer there said the church lost several congregants in the shooting and the rector, the Rev. Kathie Adams-Shepherd, was ministering to them Saturday.

-- Washington Post



## Allison N. Wyatt, Age 6

Allison Wyatt was a 6-year-old student of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

Messages on a Facebook tribute for Allison read “Our prayers go out to you and your family,” and “Rest in Peace and look over those who love you.”