

BROWARD COUNTY

LETTING GO OF THE PAIN



RELEASE: Suzanne Garcia Pino, sister of Katy Garcia, one of the teens who died, lets go of balloons during a ceremony on Saturday.

PHOTOS BY EILEEN SOLER/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD



SHE DROVE THE CAR: Jamie Bardol reads a poem in memory of the five friends. Her twin sister was one of the survivors.

Family and friends of five teens killed in 1992 talked of supporting one another.

BY MICHAEL FINCH II
mfinch@MiamiHerald.com

Jamie Bardol stood on the shoulder of Loxahatchee Road to lay down a burden from 20 years ago.

She read aloud a poem, words someone sent her to absolve.

"I thought it would be appropriate for me to make a statement here today," Bardol later said. "It's not anything to do with me; it's about remembering their lives."

Here on the northwest edge of Broward County, families, neighbors and classmates reflected on the five teenagers who lived, until a fatal accident in September 1992 claimed their lives.

Many members of the community touched by tragedy came once again to the edge of Lox Road, to celebrate and add to a memorial for the dead. Ten years ago, they mounted crosses in their honor; on Saturday, they added bench-

• TURN TO CRASH, 2B



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See more photos from the ceremony

Ceremony recalls teens' death

• CRASH, FROM 1B

es, plants and mulch.

"It's a painful story. There is no way to sugarcoat it," said Marilyn Garcia, mother of Katy Garcia, who died the night of the accident.

'ALL MY BEST FRIENDS'

Twenty years ago, a three-car convoy charged down Lox Road headed to a bonfire to celebrate Nikki Roller's upcoming birthday.

They taunted and jeered one another to catch up. Jamie Bardol, then 16, was at the helm of her grandmother's 1986 Pontiac Grand Am carrying seven of her closest friends when the car swerved in an S-curve and plunged into the Hillsboro Canal.

The passengers from other cars rushed to aid their classmates. Billy Longhini, now 35, was in one of the other cars.

"Those were all my best friends," he said. "I wish I could have done more."

Only three survived that night: Jamie Bardol, her twin sister Lori Bardol and Shari Gerber.

The dead included Brandon Marcoux, 16; Katy Garcia, 16; Jennie Gentile, 15; Adam Garces, 16; and Nikki Roller, who was two hours shy of her 17th birthday.

They became known as B.K.J.A.N., an acronym used by Marjory Stoneman Douglas High classmates to simplify an event that was everything but. A Facebook page was set up in their memory.

STILL TEARS

More than 50 people showed up for Saturday's memorial.

"It's been 20 years and there is still a lot of tears," said Davey Marcoux-Young, the mother of Brandon Marcoux.

Her eyes are tired. She cries while talking about her son.

"I just don't see them as 35. I still see them as 15."

Marcoux-Young is now in the process of adopting a 3-year-old girl.

"I think Brandon would



EILEEN SOLER/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

THE PAIN PERSISTS: Davey Marcoux-Young, mother of Brandon Marcoux, says, 'I just don't see them as 35. I still see them as 15.'



MIAMI HERALD FILE, 1992

AFTER THE CRASH: Jamie Bardol, left, waits with twin sister Lori to talk with the press. She pleaded no contest to a traffic violation and was fined \$250.

have enjoyed having a baby sister," she said.

The idea for the memorial service came from Robin Moldoff Pennant, who went to school with the teens.

"I just wanted to be able to celebrate their lives and keep their memories alive," Pennant said.

The informal service included the reading of poetry, giving four crosses and one Star of David a fresh coat of paint, and releasing balloons.

Lauren Beaty, 35, still wears a nameplate that says "BKJAN." She came from Los Angeles to be at the memorial.

"It was a really a confusing time for everybody," Beaty said. "And we all mourn differently."

Grief came in all forms af-

ter the accident. Some lashed out at Jamie Bardol, calling her a "murderer." Others kept silent.

Marilyn Garcia, who comforted Jamie Bardol at her trial, spoke about the frenzy that ensued.

"We all understand. We all mucked up," said Garcia. "If something like this happens again, maybe we'll do things differently."

She and her husband Ernie detoured a trip to Canada to come to the memorial. "The best way to deal with a tragedy is to support each other," Ernie Garcia said.

STILL PROCESSING

Lori Bardol never went to any of the five funerals. She was hospitalized in a coma.

"Hopefully it was a time for healing for everyone — it

was for me," Lori Bardol said Saturday.

Although Jamie Bardol wasn't seriously injured physically in the accident, she underwent years of emotional torment.

After pleading no contest to a traffic violation, she was fined \$250, ordered to perform 200 hours of community service, complete a course in safe driving and serve a six-month curfew.

During that time, parents of some of the dead teens hired a private investigator to try to catch Jamie violating her probation.

She went from a solid "A" student to getting "D's" and "F's."

She and Lori sued their mother, who had abandoned them when they were toddlers, for unpaid child support. Jamie needed the money to pay for her college tuition to the University of Florida.

They never got a dime. A District Court of Appeal judge upheld a ruling that the case be thrown out in 1999.

Jamie moved to California and got a job in finance and banking. She moved back to Coral Springs a few years ago, but isn't working now and plans to move again soon.

"It has taken me 20 years to process this," Jamie Bardol said.

"And I'm still processing this."