

Pond: Disappearance worries Clackamas students, faculty members; FBI, local police continue investigation, questioning persons of interest

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"They are doing a severe search behind the apartments where Ashley lives with her mom," said Martin. "They're starting to fan out," he added.

According to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, in 2000, 876,213 persons were reported missing to the police and were entered in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This is broken down as juveniles, endangered and involuntary. Most runaway cases and voluntary disappearances are described as juvenile. These cases represent 78 percent of the total missing per year.

Persons who are missing and in the company of another person under circumstances where his/her physical safety is in danger are considered endangered and they make up 14 percent of the total cases.

Involuntary cases, which are people missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, make up 4 percent of the total cases per year.

According to reports from oregonlive.com and KATU Channel 2 News, no evidence has been found that Ashley Pond is a runaway. However, nothing is being ruled out. There is still hope for the family. More people are volunteering and every day searches continue and flyers are posted.

"All of the mass searches took place in the Newell Creek area," said Lieutenant John Stewart of the Oregon City Police Department.

"We all have to think positively," said Martin.

No evidence of foul play has been reported. Ashley Pond is presently considered as being in danger and missing under suspicious circumstances.

Currently, there are no suspects, but people are still being questioned and according to reports there are "four to six people that are being looked at very hard".

"We don't have any suspects since we are investigating for a missing person. We talked to everybody (neighbors, parents, friends, and so on). We are not sure whether a crime has been committed. Right now we are looking at it from a missing person standpoint," said Stewart.

The FBI has joined the search and has been working with the Oregon City Police Department. Dogs have been brought in specifically trained to find cadavers.

"Our agents certainly are working with Oregon City to continue with the investigation," said Beth Ann Steele, FBI spokesperson.

Every tip is being looked into and the grounds have and will continue to be thoroughly searched.

As the days turn into weeks the family continues to remain positive and hope for the best. However, each day that goes by is making it harder and harder to obtain

any evidence.

"It's getting scary, this long," said Martin. "We're just beside ourselves."

At Clackamas, many students, young mothers and faculty members expressed their concern.

"Students are worried. A lot of them mentioned that they live in the area where Ashley's family lives and have known her," said Sue Kamp, assistant director at the FRC (Family Resource Center).

"Now, we have to be more aware. Especially in the Newell Creek area, it's such a long walk to the bus station."

Sherrie Duffy who teaches at the FRC has known Pond for several years.

"Ashley was friends' with my niece. They were both on the dance team together. My niece is

very upset and she worries about her friend," Duffy said. "It's scary. At Newell Creek, kids have to go all the way to the top of the hill to catch the bus. Where I live parents now always walk with their children to the bus station."

As of January 29, 2002, reports are coming in through several sources that the FBI is looking at the Pond family computer's hard drive. Some adults that knew Ashley or were directly in her life are being questioned heavily after reports from interviews with other people that has led them to new information.

As search efforts continue the family asks for help. Anyone with information about this case or Ashley is encouraged to call 24 hours at (503) 656-1045 or (503) 421-9882.



SALENA DE LA CRUZ / Clackamas Print
View from the rear of the Newell Creek Apartment complex in Oregon City, where 12-year-old Ashley Pond disappeared from on the morning of Jan. 9. Local police have enlisted the help of the FBI in the investigation of the case.

CLACKAMAS CRIMEWATCH

Jan. 7, 2002: 2:30 p.m. Theft I. A car is broken into located in the Family Resource Center (FRC) parking lot. The dash was broken and over \$1,000 worth of property is stolen.

Jan. 7, 2002: 9:30 a.m. Theft I. A car in Barlow parking lot is broken into and over \$990 worth of property is stolen.

Jan. 16, 2002: 1:50 p.m. A purse was originally reported as misplaced, but is later found in the Community Center and had been rifled through, with \$20 in cash and numerous credit cards and bank cards taken.

Jan. 19, 2002: Approximately 3 p.m. Public Safety responded to a call for a fight and had to call in Oregon City police since unarmed security was the only one on duty. The fight involved a wrestler taking part in a tournament at Clackamas over the weekend. The altercation began with the wrestler and a woman and when a man came to her aid, the fight broke out.

Jan. 23, 2002: Afternoon. Public Safety responded to a call about a girl who pushed her boyfriend and he pushed her back.

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