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PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A large crowd gathers at the base of Rocky Butte to give comfort and prayers to the family and friends of Yashanee Vaughn. The local teenager's body was found in heavy brush off Northeast Rocky Butte Road on Friday. The identification of the remains was confirmed from DNA evidence on Tuesday.

Closer to Closure

Body on Rocky Butte identified as missing girl

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After the ambiguous disappearance of teenager Yashanee Vaughn on March 19, her body has been found, putting to rest the lingering question, dead or alive, which has tirelessly haunted her family and friends for over four months.

Tuesday, the Oregon State Medical Examiner released results from DNA tests which confirmed the remains located over the weekend on Rocky Butte Road in Northeast Port-

land were those of the 14-year-old girl.

The cause of death was determined to be a gunshot wound to the head.

"The remains found this weekend were confirmed this morning to be those of my granddaughter Yashanee," said Vaughn's grandmother Reynelda Hayes. "Although the news was expected, it didn't make it any easier to hear the words from investigators of confirmation."

According to Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schrunk, her accused killer, 16-year-old Parish Bennette Jr., told investigators last week where he hid Vaughn's body and pro-

vided police with the information that led them to the remains.

Bennette, who was Vaughn's boyfriend at the time of her death, revealed the information two days after his attorneys initiated a settlement conference before Multnomah County Judge Eric Bergstrom.

On March 28, police first searched Bennette's home, which is located less than a mile from Rocky Butte. The residence was also the location where police said they discovered blood on Bennette's

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Yashanee Vaughn