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Friday, 06 October 2017 09:48









Community copes with the loss of beloved Miyamura secretary

Lisa Romero-Muniz, 48, a discipline secretary at Miyamura High School, went to the Route 91 Harvest in Las Vegas, NV to cut loose and enjoy top country music stars perform during the three-day festival.

People danced and sang along with Jason Aldean when it began to rain bullets, shortly after 10 pm on Oct. 1.

This is when Romero-Muniz, as many of her friends, students and co-workers alike have said, she earned her wings as an "angel," albeit, well before her time.

Romero-Muniz was one of 58 victims gunned down by crazed shooter Stephen Paddock, 64, of Mesquite, NV, who booked a suite on the 32nd floor at Mandalay Bay resort on the south end of the Las Vegas Strip. He broke out two windows to launch what is being called, according to media reports, "the worst mass shooting in modern history."

In watchtower sniper fashion, he fired at concert-goers, who were more than 1,000 feet across the street from his perch at the high-rise hotel. Revelers had few places to run for cover inside of the open-top arena.

The siege ended when Paddock shot and killed himself as police closed in on his room.

The next day, in the early morning hours, social media was abuzz with reports of Romero-Muniz's death. The death of this beloved wife, mother, and grandmother sent shockwaves through the Gallup community.

During a candlelight vigil held on a chilly Monday night, Oct. 2, area dignitaries, co-workers, and students she encouraged to stay the course to graduation, cried as they remembered Romero-Muniz.

"It has been a really rough day," said her co-worker Shon Lewis. "I sat down, and across from

me is an empty chair."

Lewis wept, describing the bubbly and charming secretary, who always jumped in to help develop a plan of action for students facing an array of disciplinary problems.

Miyamura Senior Monique Flores, said Romero-Muniz made a huge impact on students' lives, "including mine."

"I feel like I lost an important piece of my heart," she added.

State Rep. Doreen Wonda Johnson, D-Church Rock, expressed her condolences, saying "she's an angel" behind the stars.

Others that spoke at the vigil also referred to Romero-Muniz as an "angel" as well, whose charismatic soul will continue to watch over the school and the students she loved.

Earlier Monday, Gallup McKinley County Schools Superintendent Mike Hyatt issued a press release, describing Romero-Muniz as "an incredibly loving and sincere friend, mentor and advocate for students in many of our schools … we will miss all of these great attributes she shared with students, staff and parents in our community."

Her cousin, Paul Romero of El Paso, TX, said Monday afternoon that he was feeling a mix of emotions, ranging from shock and anger to pure grief. He was at work when his daughter called him with the horrible news.

"I grew up with her in Gallup," he said. "She was a very sweet person. She was liked and loved by everyone."

It has been some time since he has seen his cousin, but he said he has been bombarded by numerous interview requests from different media groups.

Meanwhile, Romero-Muniz's family has quietly dealt with their sudden grief, piecing together what to do next regarding how to best honor her memory and legacy. The family plans to release a statement soon, according to a family spokesman.

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