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Parents, friends mourn Tallahassee 8-year-old

BY TABITHA YANG • DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER • MAY 12, 2008

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Sunday was the most tearful Mother's Day for Kelly Mitchell. She was crying as she said goodbye to her son, Kyle Jones, whose body lay in a casket at the Southside Cemetery.

Sunday's funeral service for Kyle, who drowned Tuesday in an industrial sand pit, was attended by a sizable crowd of his family and friends. The 8-year-old was playing with some friends when he fell into a pool of water in a sand pit near his home in western Leon County.

About half a dozen of Kyle's Little League teammates attended the funeral, wearing their black pants, orange T-shirts and blue ball caps. His coach, Scott Vandenberg, spoke at the service, reminiscing about Kyle's determination on the ball field.

"He was very intense," he said. "He brought his best game."

The Rev. Clarence Gray, of Calvary Tabernacle of the Apostolic Way, also spoke at the funeral.

"There are things in life that are hard to understand," he said. But he reminded those in attendance that God was still in control. "All things work together for the good of them that love God."

There were few dry eyes among the people who gathered under the green tent where photos of Kyle, his casket and bouquets of flowers were displayed.

Gray read a portion of a eulogy written by Mitchell. She recalled a boy who wore his T-shirts inside out and backward, who loved being outside and who always wanted to buy other people ice cream cones when the truck came by.

"Kyle always put everyone else before himself," she wrote. "Kyle loved everything outside, from the nasty bugs to the brightest stars in the sky. That's what made him so unique."

Bettina Nelson, 40, a friend of the family, said Kyle's family, which includes his mother, Mitchell, father, Willie Jones, sisters Antonine Hopkins and Tammalyn Jones and brother Kaleb Jones, is bearing the loss as best they can.

"It's hard having to bury your own before yourself," she said. "Kyle was a rambunctious child, but very sweet."

Audra DeMoss, 37, another family friend, has known Kyle's mother for 15 years.

"(The family) is taking one day at a time," she said. "I can't imagine what they're going through."

- Contact Reporter Tabitha Yang at (850) 599-2304 or tyang@tallahassee.com.

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Friends, family and baseball teammates turned out to pay their respects to 8 year-old Kyle Jones during funeral services for the Canopy Oaks Elementary School student on Sunday, May 11, 2008 who died on Tuesday in an outdoor accident. (MIKE EWEN/Democrat)



Eight-year-old Kyle Jones drowned in a huge sand pit on Tuesday May 6, 2008.

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