

Police pursuit called off

Local teens survive stolen van crash

"It's nothing short of a miracle" four teenage Georgetown girls escaped serious injury or death Thursday when a stolen van in which they were fleeing police collided with a dump truck on Townline Road at the Oshawa-Clarington border.

The van had been stolen from Georgetown May 10.

Minutes before the crash, at about 9:50 a.m., Durham Regional Police received a report of four females "acting suspicious" in a van parked behind a Hwy. 2 fruit stand in Courtice.

According to police, an officer in a marked cruiser arrived and the Chrysler Caravan sped west along Hwy. 2, reaching speeds of 140 km/h.

"The officer initiated a pursuit and very quickly called off

the pursuit because of the traffic situation and the manner in which the van was being driven," said Sgt. Jim Grimley.

The fleeing vehicle cut across a gas station parking lot at Townline Road and turned north, at which time it was spotted by another police officer, said Grimley.

He said the van was trying to pass another northbound car when it spun out of control, fish-tailed into southbound traffic and was struck by the oncoming dump truck.

Two occupants, 17-year-old girls, were thrown from the van, while another had to be freed by firefighters.

A fourth occupant was able to climb out of the front passenger seat of the van without help.

The Province's Special

Investigations Unit attended the crash scene but decided not to investigate further when it was learned the injuries were not serious.

Two of the girls were treated at Lakeridge Health Oshawa for "road rash," then released into police custody. The two others, one of whom possibly suffered broken ribs, were treated at Lakeridge Health Bowmanville, and were also expected to be released from hospital.

Grimley said the second officer who spotted the minivan called it "the worst collision he's ever seen..."

"It was pretty horrendous to witness. It's nothing short of a miracle they survived."

The girls have all been charged with possession of stolen property over \$5,000.



Debris lies scattered on an Oshawa road after a stolen van carrying four Georgetown girls crashed into a dump truck in Oshawa last week. The youths escaped serious injury.

Photo by Walter Passarella

The 17-year-old driver was also charged with possession of stolen property under \$5,000, dangerous driving and failing

to stop for police. The driver of the dump truck was not injured.

—By Stephen Shaw, special

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