



# 'Our hearts are broken'

## Gunman kills 26 at elementary school; 20 students among dead

## Shooter's aunt from Crystal Lake: Family is 'shaken to the core'

By JOHN CHRISTOFFERSEN  
The Associated Press

NEWTOWN, Conn. — A man killed his mother at their home and then opened fire Friday inside an elementary school, massacring 26 people, including 20 children, as youngsters covered in fear to the sound of gunshots reverberating through the building and screams echoing over the intercom.

The 20-year-old killer, carrying at least two handguns, committed suicide at the school, bringing the death toll to 28, authorities said.

The rampage, coming less than two weeks before Christmas, was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting, exceeded only by the Virginia Tech massacre that claimed 33 lives in 2007.

"Our hearts are broken today," a tearful President Barack Obama, struggling to maintain his composure, said at the White House. He called for "meaningful action" to prevent such shootings. "As a country, we have been through this too many times," he said.

Police shed no light on the motive for the attack. The gunman, Adam Lanza, was believed to suffer from a personality disorder and lived with his mother, said a law enforcement official who was briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it.

Panicked parents raced to Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, a prosperous New England community of about 27,000 people 60 miles northeast of New York City. Police told youngsters at the kindergarten-through-fourth-grade school to close their eyes as they were led from the building so that they wouldn't see the blood and broken glass.

Schoolchildren — some crying, others looking frightened — were escorted through a parking lot in a line, hands on each other's shoulders.

Law enforcement officials speaking on condition of anonymity said that Lanza killed his mother, Nancy Lanza, then drove to the school in her car with at least three guns, including a high-powered rifle that he apparently left in the back of the vehicle, and shot up two classrooms around 9:30 a.m.

Authorities gave no details on exactly how the attack unfolded, but police radio traffic indicated the shooting lasted only a few minutes.

A custodian ran through the halls, warning of a gunman on the loose, and someone



A woman hugs her daughter after they are reunited on Friday at the Sandy Hook firehouse after a mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. The shooter killed 27 people, including 20 children, and himself.

## 'My heart is absolutely numb'

By DAN MCCALED  
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and The Associated Press

CRYSTAL LAKE — The aunt of the suspect in the Connecticut school shooting says her family is "shaken to the core" by Friday's massacre that left 26 people dead, including 20 elementary-aged children.

"We're in total shock. No one can believe it," Marsha Lanza of Crystal Lake told the Northwest Herald late Friday night. "This whole thing is mind-boggling. We're shaken to the core."

Marsha Lanza's sister-in-law, Nancy, was among those killed by Adam Lanza in Friday's rampage. In a phone interview with the Northwest Herald, Marsha Lanza said she had not seen Adam since he was about 3 years old, but communicated regularly with his mother.

"I knew he had some learning issues in

school," Marsha said, "but I don't know if there were any behavioral issues. Right now, we don't know any more than you probably do."

Marsha said her husband, Nancy's brother, is in North Carolina working because he lost his job in Illinois. She said her husband saw Adam this past summer and did not notice that he was suffering from any mental health issues.

"I'm numb; my heart is absolutely numb," Marsha Lanza said.

Marsha Lanza has lived with her family in Crystal Lake since 1999. They have five boys, two of whom attend Prairie Ridge High School.

She told The Associated Press that her nephew was raised by kind, nurturing parents who would not have hesitated to seek mental help for him if he needed it.

Marsha Lanza described Nancy Lanza as a good mother and kindhearted.

### MORE COVERAGE INSIDE AND ONLINE

■ Connecticut massacre was latest in series of many school shootings in recent decades. **PAGE A4**

■ Shooting suspect Adam

Lanza, 20, was honors student. **PAGE A5**

■ President Obama, saying child victims "had their entire lives ahead of them," calls for

action after shooting. **PAGE A5**

■ To join the local conversation about this tragedy, visit our Facebook discussion at <http://shawurl.com/g5v>.

## Local schools plan for safety, security

### Parents, districts weigh how to tell kids about attack

### Voice your opinion

Should local school personnel discuss Friday's tragedy with their students? Vote at [NWHERALD.COM](http://NWHERALD.COM).

By EMILY K. COLEMAN  
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As school officials across the country weighed what to do in response to Friday's massacre at a Connecticut elementary school, one Woodstock official said she just wanted to run home and hug her daughter.

The response of area school districts was fairly consistent, but Northwest Herald readers responding to the story on Facebook were divided. They differed on whether schools should address the complicated — and sometimes unanswerable — questions that students will have or

leave that up to parents.

Districts 200, 158 and 155 did not formally inform their students of the shootings.

Both Woodstock District 200 and Huntley District 158 have students ranging from pre-kindergarten through 12th-graders. District 155 has only high school students.

"The news that we've been getting has been sketchy all day long," said Terry Awrey, associate superintendent of D-158. "We've been getting bits and pieces, and we don't have a full story to tell our kids."

See **SCHOOLS**, page A4

## LOCALLY SPEAKING



Sarah Nader — snader@shawmedia.com

## McHENRY COUNTY COUNTY SHAKES UP COMMITTEES

Under a tentative plan hashed out Friday, all but one of the McHenry County Board's 11 standing committees will have new chairmen. A Committee on Committees spent about 2½ hours assigning the board's 24 members to the groups in which much of county government's work takes place. **For more, see page B1.**

**CRYSTAL LAKE:** CL Central's Thomas gives Tigers some room to breathe in 54-46 win over Huntley. **Sports, C1**

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Business	E1-2	Local&Region	B1-5
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Classified	E3-10	Movies	B7
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