

Friends mourn student who died in his sleep Tuesday

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Classmates of Cody Fellows gather at Sonrise Church in Forest Grove

Less than 24 hours after Forest Grove High School senior Cody Fellows passed away unexpectedly Tuesday night, shocked friends and classmates gathered at Sonrise Church in town Wednesday evening to remember him.



by: COURTESY - Forest Grove High School senior Cody Fellows, who died Tuesday night, was part of the FFA program at his school.

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Fellows, who apparently died in his sleep, was 18.

About 120 mourners came to the church on 19th Avenue just before 7 p.m. and made their way to the service in the children's ministry room. Among those in attendance were Tom Robinson and Susan Dieter-Robinson, parents of Abigail Robinson and Anna Dieter-Eckerdt, the two sisters who died in October after a car ran over them while they were playing in a pile of leaves on Main Street. The Robinsons are members at Sonrise.

"Tonight we are allowing time to grieve together," Sonrise Pastor Rudy Tinoco told the crowd. "Healing begins with being together."

There was no immediate word about the cause of Fellows' death. It is not known whether an autopsy will be performed.

Chris Higginbotham, Fellows' teacher and leader of Forest Grove High's Viking House crew, a student construction group that hand-builds a house each year, said it was hard to slow Fellows down.

"He was a hard dog to keep under the porch," Higginbotham said. "He had a great heart and I feel fortunate to have known him."

Fellows was "daring," noted Kathy Daugherty, who knew him when he was in fifth-grade at Tom McCall Upper Elementary School. "He persevered and persevered through life and that is an awesome character trait."

A number of those at the vigil recalled Fellows' sense of humor. One told a story about the day he missed the bus and decided to drive his tractor to school. He stuck a parking sticker on it, making all his friends and the school security officer laugh.

"He didn't care about the outcome, no matter how much trouble he got in," said Tyler Baxter, who went to school with Fellows for two years.

Word of Fellows' passing spread quickly in the halls at FGHS Wednesday, and classmates took to social media to express their feelings about their friend.

"He was a the hardest worker and the most entertaining guy on the crew," student Charlotte Sidman wrote on Facebook. "Today's been rough."

Teri Scott, an instructional assistant for the district, wrote that Fellows would be greatly missed.

"I was looking forward to watching you walk across the stage at graduation," wrote Scott.

Sierra Rinier, who had known Fellows since they were in eighth-grade, noted it was "hard to believe" he was gone.

"You never failed to make me laugh and you had a great big heart," she wrote.

In addition to Viking House crew, Fellows also was active in the Forest Grove FFA chapter.

Principal Karen Robinson posted a letter to families on the high school's website Wednesday, saying officials "have been implementing a plan for supporting students and staff who need it" in the wake of the teenager's death.

"We know that you will join us in our support and sympathy for those impacted by this sad event," the message read, adding that "school staff and district counselors have been and will continue to be available to students who need special attention and support."