

# WHY WE WORE WHITE

The Blue Valley School District felt a deep loss on Sunday, April 13 when three lives were lost to shootings at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) and Village Shalom. One of the three victims who died was a student at Blue Valley High School. Blue Valley freshman Reat Underwood was there for a singing audition. Underwood was involved in theater, debate, and choir at BV High. In response to his passing, members of the community decided to wear white to commemorate Underwood's life. BV West Principal Dr. Brett Potts was one of the first to spread this idea to the BV West community. In an

email sent out the day after

the shooting, he asked for students to participate in wearing white.

"The Blue Valley West staff sends its deepest sympathies to all those affected by the tragedy that took place yesterday," Potts said. "As a school community, we would like join our sister Blue Valley high schools in a show of support by wearing white on Tuesday."

For some at BV West, this act meant a great deal. Sophomore Frankie Skinner was a family friend of the Underwood family and seeing the mass of students wearing white that Tuesday was "really cool."

"People don't realize the impact it had on the family," Skinner said. "They actually realize what's going on, they are so thankful for the amount of support they have. My only thing about it was that some people wore white one day, but forgot the next day. I feel like if you're going to wear it, wear it proudly and know the impact it has on people."

Skinner is not alone in her desire for the memory of the shooting victim's to help a good cause. Underwood's mother, Mindy Corporon, lost both a son and a father on April 13. Her father, Dr. William

Corporon was also killed at JCC as he took Underwood to his singing audition. In a televised statement, Corporon spoke of what she hoped the community might gain from this loss.

"We want something good to come out of this," Corporon said. "We don't know what that's going to be. So we want people to let us know if

**"Being there, watching it all happen, seeing everybody come together, that's probably the greatest part of it."**  
-Freshman Berkley Selvin

they think something good has come out of it."

Freshman Berkley Selvin was inside the JCC at the time of the shooting. She was there with her Jewish youth group B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO), which has several members who are students at BV West.

"It didn't really hit until later on in the week that this had happened," Selvin said. "None of it actually seemed real, it seemed

like a dream. Sunday night after the [shooting] we went to a friend's house. Somebody had the idea, 'why don't we do something to honor the victims?' And somebody else said: 'we should do a candlelight walk'. Being there, watching it all happen, seeing everybody come together, that's probably the greatest part of it."

The walk ended up much larger than Selvin or anyone in her 25 person group could have predicted.

"Twenty-five people and it turned into 3,000," Selvin said.

"It ended up being a lot bigger than we thought it was going to be. I thought it was great to see everyone coming together for the same cause."

Throughout this process, Underwood's family and friends have shown immense strength. As the community focuses on remembering the victims, Skinner recalls the last time she spoke to Underwood personally.

"My mom and I had just gotten out of church," Skinner said. "We were talking to his mom and he walks out of the kids' area. He walks out with this really bright yellow shirt on and he's smiling. It's almost as if you could spot him out of a

crowd and say 'that kid is a good kid'. He came up to us and just started talking. Even if he barely knows you, he's going to talk to you, he's not afraid to show who he is."

One of the biggest hopes for the family of Underwood is for people to remember him for his wonderful life, rather than the unfortunate circumstance that took his life away.

"You know what?" Corporon said. "He was with us for a wonderful 14 years. He had a really full life for a 14-year-old and we were very blessed."

The family's strength has been inspiring to the community. For Skinner, it is moving to see such support by the community for Underwood, but hopes that people can see past the events to who Underwood was, despite his untimely death. "I hope everyone

doesn't just look at Reat as the kid who got shot, but remember him for being a really happy child who loved to make others laugh, who loved to do things for other people," Skinner said. "He was close to being an Eagle Scout. His birthday is coming up. I hope they remember him for that, not dying."

CARLY MCDONALD  
Copy Editor



Top right going clockwise: Senior Jay Sitzman attending the candlelight walk at the Jewish Community Center to honor the victims. Senior Evan Lite walking to commemorate the victims of the shooting. Members of a Jewish Youth organization lead the 3,000 people who attended the walk carrying a banner to honor the victims and families. Senior BV West debaters during the moment of silence for the victims before the walk began.

PHOTOS BY: VINNIE GARIMELLA & DEBORAH GLENN

