

Oregon Local News

Portland teen collapses and dies during wilderness camp hike

Posted by Stephen Beaven, The Oregonian September 01, 2009 14:44PM

The Lake County Sheriff's Office is investigating the death of a Portland teen who collapsed during a hike as part of a wilderness camp exercise, a spokesman said today.

Sergey Blashchishen, 16, died Friday after collapsing about 2:30 p.m., said Deputy Chuck Pore. An autopsy was performed on Sunday but the results are incomplete and a cause of death has not been determined, Pore said.

Investigators are trying to find out if Blashchishen, who lived in Northeast Portland, had any medical problems that might have contributed to his death, Pore said. He had passed a physical the day before he died.

Blashchishen was attending the SageWalk wilderness school, a program for troubled teens based in Redmond. He was hiking with a group in northern Lake County between Burns and Bend when he got sick.

"He said he didn't feel good and shortly after that collapsed," Pore said.

The Bureau of Land Management has suspended the permit for SageWalk to operate on BLM land, pending the outcome of the investigation. It could not be confirmed if Blashchishen was on BLM property when he collapsed.

"SageWalk considers student safety our number one priority and takes this incident very seriously," SageWalk Executive Director Mike Bednarz said in a statement.

Lyudmila Blashchishena, Sergey's mother, said she was told that her son vomited and then passed out during the hike, adding that he did not suffer from any medical conditions.

"We are still so shocked," she said. "He always did sports, never had any disease. How could he pass away just from hiking?"

Blashchishen dropped out of Parkrose High School last year, his mother said, and enrolled in the wilderness school on Thursday.

He had worked construction and lived with an uncle before deciding to go to SageWalk.

"He asked me to place him in the boot camp," his mother said. "He really wanted to change his behavior."

--Stephen Beaven; stevebeaven@news.oregonian.com

© 2009 Oregon Live LLC. All Rights Reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#), [Privacy Policy](#) and [Advertising Agreement](#).