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Mother grieves for son who died on hiking trip

by Jeff Jaeger KATU News and KATU.com Staff

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PORTLAND, Ore. – A Portland teen who was trying to turn his life around died unexpectedly at a wilderness boot camp in Central Oregon and his mother can't fathom the news.

"I just was shocked," Lyudmila Blashchishena said after learning of her son's death on Friday. "I couldn't believe, how could my son die from hiking?"

Her son, 16-year-old Sergey, had left the day before for a wilderness camp in Lake County.

"While they were hiking he didn't feel so good and he wanted to take the break and he took off his backpack," his mother said.

Moments later he died with no explanation.

"I was so worried about him because, you know, 16-year-old boy, a completely healthy boy."

Blashchishena said Sergey was a very athletic teen and had no health problems.

"It's not like it was severe exercise like military boot camp; it was educational boot camp, adventure camp," she said.

The only problems he had were in life. He dropped out of school a year ago, but he wanted to turn his life around.

"He asked me to place him to boot camp because he actually wanted to change," Blashchishena said.

"It was very expensive for us so we took equity from our house to make sure we save our child," she said.

“I expected so much from this boot camp to be honest, you know,” Blashchishena said.
“How could he just leave us?”

Autopsy results are still pending, but Blashchishena was told Sergey likely died of heat exhaustion.

A memorial fund has been set up in Sergey’s honor at Bank of America. Contributions can be made at any branch.