



Roxana Kennedy
Chief of Police

CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICE MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: August 23rd, 2024
To: San Diego Media
From: Chula Vista Police Department
Contact: Sergeant Anthony Molina
Phone: (619) 385-6775
Email: pio@chulavistapd.org
Subject: **TEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH SERIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VANDALISM INCIDENTS – 1650 EXPLORATION FALLS DRIVE, CHULA VISTA**

Message: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chula Vista police officers have arrested a 15-year-old teenager in connection with felony vandalisms being investigated as hate crimes.

On Sunday afternoon, August 18th, officers were dispatched to Enrique Camarena Elementary School (1650 Exploration Falls Drive, Chula Vista) regarding graffiti type vandalism that occurred sometime over that weekend. They spoke with school staff who discovered the graffiti on several walls, doors, and on a large mural. The graffiti included racial epithets directed towards multiple races and symbols such as swastikas.

Early Monday morning, after parents and school staff spent hours cleaning and covering over the graffiti, new and similar graffiti was found at the front of the campus by a local news team who arrived to cover the story. Although additional security measures were implemented, a third incident was reported by school staff early Wednesday morning, August 21st. The new graffiti was found at the back of the school. The overall cost for repairs was estimated in the thousands of dollars and was investigated by the Chula Vista Police Department as a series of felony hate crimes.

Throughout the initial investigation, the Chula Vista Police Department and its School Resource Officers worked closely with school staff to determine who was responsible for the vandalism and to ensure the safety of staff and students. Federal authorities and the Anti-Defamation League were also consulted as part of an overall investigative and safety strategy.

School Resource Officers and investigators have collected evidence and spoken with numerous community members including residents in the area, students, and staff. Results led authorities to identifying at least one suspect involved in the vandalism.

On Friday, August 23rd, at approximately 7 p.m., a 15-year-old teenager was arrested without incident at a local high school football game while investigators were serving a search warrant at his residence in Chula Vista, not far from Camarena Elementary. He is facing felony hate crime and felony vandalism charges.

Chief Roxana Kennedy says, "I want the community to know, as a parent myself, I acknowledged their fears and concerns from the onset. While we couldn't discuss our specific strategies publicly, my department made finding the person responsible for causing this fear its top priority. These hateful acts are unacceptable, and we will not tolerate behavior like this in our community. I'm thankful to the FBI and members of our local school staff and community for coming together to help us put an end to this quickly."

Although an arrest has been made, School Resource Officers and investigators are continuing to investigate the series of vandalisms and ask that anyone with information contact San Diego County Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477 or submit tips anonymously online or through the P3tips mobile application.

**Weekend and after-hour inquiries should be directed to the Watch Commander at (619)476-5374, however no other information is available for release at the time of this media advisory distribution.*

Prepared By: Sgt. Anthony Molina
Copies Sent To: San Diego Media

Approved By: Capt. Matt Smith
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