Seatbelt Use and Safety Fatality File

Sisters killed in crash not wearing seat belts

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC (WWAY) — The lives of two Columbus County families drastically changed Saturday night, but what could have been done differently to prevent the death of two children?

In the aftermath of Saturday's horrible accident, investigators are left wondering if things would have been different if seat belts had been used.

Around 6:30 p.m. Saturday investigators say a SUV driven by Jesus Mondragon, 34, ran a stop sign at the intersection of NC 131 and Silver Spoon Road hitting the vehicle of 20-year-old Hannah Worley. Neither worley nor any of Mondragon's four passengers were wearing a seat belt.

"Speed was not a factor. The vehicle didn't stop, ran the stop sign at approximately 55 miles per hour and collided with the other vehicle that had the right of way on 131," Highway Patrol Sgt. John M. Lewis said. "Out of the wreck there were two unrestrained children in the back of the vehicle that ran the stop sign, and they were ejected and died as the result of the collision."

The two children killed were 11-year-old Samantha Mondragon and 2-year-old Ashley Mondragon. Investigators say their were lives were cut short by a series of bad decisions that highlight the importance of wearing a seat belt.

"Any time we have serious injuries or fatalities it's very unfortunate, but to involve children is an absolute tragedy," Sgt. Lewis said. "It's the parent's responsibility or their guardian or that person operating the vehicle to make sure that everyone is

restrained. For children to be as innocent as they are, most just don’t know better. If they don’t practice it themselves, then these are the outcomes.”

Outcomes that affect all involved for the rest of their lives.

“It’s tough,” Sgt. Lewis said. “I know it’s tough on the families and all involved, but it’s also tough on our troopers. We see more than our share of tragedy, and it goes full circle the impact of these collisions.”

The investigation into the accident continues. Jesus Mondragon has not been charged for his role in the accident.