



Emilie Parker

May 12, 2006 - December 14, 2012

The eldest of three, Emilie Parker, 6, was a loving girl, a leader and a "best friend" to her little sisters, her father, Robbie Parker, said at an emotional news conference Saturday evening.

All three were born within three years of one another. The younger girls are 3 and 4, he said.

"They were all very close," said Mr. Parker. "She was teaching my middle daughter to read. She would help my youngest daughter how to make things, show her how to do crafts."

Mr. Parker said the family moved to Newtown about eight months ago, when he accepted a job in Danbury as a physician's assistant. They have family in Utah, and formerly lived in Ogden, Utah, according to press reports.

Emilie was kind and sunny-natured, Mr. Parker said, "the type of person who could just light up a room." She was, he said, "an incredible person, and I am so blessed to be her dad."

He said her sisters looked up to her: "It was really sweet to see the times when one of them would fall or one of them would get their feelings hurt, how they would run to Emilie for support and hugs and kisses."

Mr. Parker had been teaching Emilie Portuguese. On Friday morning, before he left for work, the two chatted in Portuguese. "She said she loved me, and she gave me a kiss, and I was out the door."

The Parkers' extended family has set up a memorial fund in her name. Speaking at the news conference, Jill Garrett, an aunt of Emilie's, said the fund will be used to bring her back to Utah "for her final resting place."

Fighting back tears and struggling to catch his breath, Robbie Parker, Emilie's father, told the world about a little girl who loved to draw and was always smiling, and he also reserved surprising words of sympathy for the gunman.

"She was beautiful. She was blond. She was always smiling," he said.

To the gunman's family, he said, "I can't imagine how hard this experience must be for you."

He said he struggled to explain the death to Emilie's two siblings, 3 and 4.

"They seem to get the fact that they have somebody they're going to miss very much," he said.

Parker said his daughter loved to try new things -- except for new food. And she was quick to cheer up those in need.

"She never missed an opportunity to draw a picture or make a card for those she around her," he said.

The world is a better place because Emilie was in it, he said.

"I'm so blessed to be her dad," he said.