Rhia Danae Almeida, 7, died not far from her home in Ajo on Thursday evening, June 18. She was born in Phoenix on September 30, 2001. She came to Ajo from Kaka Village with her family in 2008 and began attending school here. A first grader, she was attending summer school and getting ready to start second grade in the fall.

"She was such a special girl," said her mother, Elayne Gregg. "She was full of life. She loved her family, school, drawing, dancing, and Hannah Montana.

"Rhia was a tomboy who loved Hannah Montana. "She was just beginning to like girly stuff," said her mother. She was constantly in motion, and was just learning how to break dance. Rhia was usually so happy she was bubbling over. "It was hugs and kisses all day," said her mother.

Rhia loved school and was enjoying summer school, both because she was a bright little girl and because she loved to be around people.

She adored her older brothers but that didn’t keep her from pestering them with lighting and playing with them, like any little sister would do.

Asked about her, Rhia’s brother Julian, 9, said, “I love her, miss her.

She liked to play with the puppy and always loved to carry baby Roman. She made me laugh and we always played together.

Her brother Jesse, 10, said, “I found her bike and I didn’t see her. I didn’t know where she was at. I miss her and I love her. She was the best sister. Me and her were supposed to have fun. I wish I was there for. And everybody loves her.

Her baby brother Roman, who just turned one, always lit up when he saw her. She was always carrying him and bouncing him around, said her mother. “He also misses her. Rhia loved Roman so very much.”

"We remember how much she loved to draw, dance, and give hugs and kisses," said her mother. “She was a true angel on earth who loved her brothers and loved to make everyone laugh. Everyone who knew her is truly blessed. Such a beautiful girl. We will truly love and miss her. She is happy now and in a good place.”

"I will never forget all the fun and funny times she brought to our whole family,” said her mother. “She truly had an enormous amount of love that she gave everyone who knew her. She was my best friend and I know I will see her and hold her again. And that is the thing that keeps me somewhat okay. We will continue to celebrate her life til we meet again. Mama, I love and miss you so very much!”

Her stepdad, Antonio Ortiz, said, “I miss my baby. Rhia was the life of our family. I will miss her running up and giving me kisses and hugs when I get home. I miss her lighting with her brothers. She was so active and did not sit still for a minute in the world. I love you Rhia – Behave Baby.”

Her two big brothers, Jesse and Julian, are taking her death hard, said their folks. The littlest, Roman, is too young to understand what is going on but knows something is wrong and looks for his sister.

The rest of the family is having a hard time dealing with the loss, too. When asked what people could do for them, Elayne said, “Pray for her, pray for the boys, pray for all of us.

The family attended Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Ajo. They appreciate the love and support, prayers, food, and money offered them by so many, singling out Mary Sam of Hickman for "...doing many things we just can’t do right now."

Norma Gomez of Victim Witness for being a pillar of strength, and Lonnie Guthrie, Sara Coyle, and everyone at Ajo Ambulance.

They praised the Pima County Sheriff’s Department for telling them what they needed to know with respect and professionalism and expressing gratitude to Ajo Ambulance and the Ajo-Gibson Volunteer Fire Department for their help and comfort in a time of grief.

Rhia is survived by her mother & stepfather, Elayne Gregg & Antonio Ortiz of Ajo; by her father, Jesse Almeida Sr. of Gilbert; by her brothers, Jesse Almeida, Julian Almeida, and Roman Ortiz, all of Ajo; by her aunts, Joyalyn Gregg & Erin Gregg, both of Sacaton; by her uncles, John Gregg of Sacaton, Trevor Rahos of Florence; Irene Almeida of Gilbert, and James Gregg Jr. of Casa Grande; and by his great-grandparents, Laura Sam, Angeles & James Gregg, and Robert Sam, all of Kaka Village.

A candlelight vigil will be held at the family home, 501 Solana, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 25. A wake with mass led by Father Tom will begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 27, and end at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning in Kaka Village on the Tohono O’odham Nation. Burial will take place in the Kaka Cemetery.

For those who would like to help the family through a difficult time, the Rhia Danae Almeida Donation account has been set up at the National Bank of Arizona. The account number is 76/88014852; the routing number is 122105320. People who do not have a branch of the bank near them may send checks with the information above to National Bank of Arizona, 101 La Mina, Ajo, AZ 85321.

On Sunday, June 28, a vigil will be held in Tucson at 6:30 p.m. The Rhia Danae Almeida Donation account has been set up at the National Bank of Arizona. The account number is 76/88014852; the routing number is 122105320. People who do not have a branch of the bank near them may send checks with the information above to National Bank of Arizona, 101 La Mina, Ajo, AZ 85321.

A shrine with flowers, candles, and toys has appeared at the place Rhia was found.

"I don't want him on the streets anymore," Elayne Gregg said. "I don't want him to hurt anyone else." She also expressed sympathy for the Alegria family. "I feel for their family — they didn’t do it, he did."