

2 Children Taken to Texas Burn Center after Fire That Killed Girl

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Colorado Springs (AP) – Two children who were critically injured in a fire that killed their toddler sister have been flown to a Texas burn center, and their mother was told she could be charged with murder.

Two other children who also suffered burns remained at a Denver-area hospital. Both had been listed in critical condition but one improved and was considered stable by Thursday, police Lt. Skip Arms said.

Sixteen-month-old Ashya Joseph died in the Monday night fire. The children's mother, Maria Darlene Joseph, 25, has been arrested on suspicion of murder and was being held without bail.

She was found about a block away with superficial injuries to her wrists and neck that appeared to be self-inflicted, according to an affidavit filed in court.

Joseph appeared by video hookup at a brief hearing on Wednesday and was advised of the potential murder charge. She kept her head bowed and was barely audible as she answered a judge's questions with one-word responses.

Police have said little about their reasons for arresting Joseph, who has also used the name Maria Gardner. During a 911 call from Joseph's house, a child said "oil" was on fire, a boy was dead and others were hurt.

Officials have not released the injured children's names.

A 9-year-old boy and a 3-year-old girl were flown to the Shriners Hospital in Galveston, Texas, on Wednesday. Bill Stoner, who heads the Shriners chapter in Colorado Springs, said burns covered 85 percent one child's body and 15 percent of the other's.

An 8-year-old boy remained in critical condition at The Children's Hospital in the Denver suburb of Aurora, along with a 5-year-old who police said had improved.

The State Department of Human Services says El Paso County human service workers had contacted the family in the past and state officials will investigate their handling of the case.

Authorities said Joseph's husband, Simeon Joseph, fatally shot himself at the house in October.

KKMG-FM in Colorado Springs said the Josephs were chosen for the station's "Secret Santa" program in December because they had only \$10 when Simeon Joseph killed himself. The station said it gave the family clothing, furniture, food, books, \$500 in gift cards and \$250 for utilities.

The station has now set up a fund for the family.

Source: http://www.gazette.com/articles/fire_32545_article.html/burned_joseph.html

Burned Child in Stable Condition at Children's Hospital

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One of the four children burned in a house fire Monday night allegedly set by their mother is improving.

Five-year-old Supreme Joseph was upgraded from critical to stable condition today, according to Colorado Springs police. He is at The Children's Hospital in Aurora.

Domenic Gardner, 8, is in critical condition at Children's Hospital. Dontrell Gardner, 9, and his half-sister Amarjahan Joseph, 3, who have the most severe burns, were flown to the Shriners Hospital in Galveston, Texas. Both are in critical condition, according to police.

Another child, 16-month-old Ashya Joseph, died in the fire.

The children's mother, Maria Darlene Joseph, has been arrested on suspicion of first-degree murder.

Sources have said the mother doused the children with gasoline and set them ablaze before fleeing the home. Authorities say she was found a block from the 3225 Galena Court home.

Police today confirmed they have a note left at the grave of Joseph's husband, Simeon Joseph, who committed suicide in the home in October after losing his job. Police spokesman Lt. Skip Arms would not elaborate on the "paperwork" recovered from the grave at Evergreen Cemetery on Wednesday.

Neither he nor investigators in the department's Major Crimes unit would confirm broadcast reports that the note was written by Maria Joseph and addressed to her late husband.

Source: http://www.gazette.com/articles/joseph_32589_article.html/children_hospital.html