

4 hours of surgery follow dog attack

TEEN MAULED BY 100-POUND PET

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TOMS RIVER BUREAU

OCEAN GATE — The 14-year-old local boy who was mauled by a friend's dog was recovering at home Tuesday after four hours of surgery — some of it reconstructive — the previous day, his mother said.

"It looks like a shark got him," said Margaret Flatt, mother of victim Jeffray Flatt.

Police said Jeffray Flatt was on the front porch of a friend's house on Narragansette Avenue around 3 p.m. Monday when the dog leaped from a sport-utility vehicle and attacked him. The teen suffered serious puncture wounds and lacerations on his face, neck, head, stomach and both arms, they said.

"His ear was almost detached," Margaret Flatt said. "We thought he was going to lose it."

But surgeons at Community Medical Center in Toms River did an excellent job, she said.

The dog — a bull mastiff named Brutus that police estimated to be 100 pounds — belongs to Christopher Gourley, 22, a member of the friend's family, according to Detective Barry Wohl.

The dog was in the SUV used by Gourley's mother before it charged the front porch where Jeffray Flatt was standing.

"First, it got his stomach," Margaret Flatt said. "He (Jeffray) was trying to open its mouth and it got his hands and elbows and brought him down. Then, it got his ear."

Flatt said people at the friend's house rushed Jeffray to his home on East Cape May Avenue, saying they would take him to the hospital.

"But he needed immediate attention," she said. "There was so much blood. I called the ambulance."

Her son, who will be a freshman at Central Regional High School this fall, underwent surgery at Community Medical Center and was discharged around 11:30 p.m. Monday, she said.

"He has 22 staples in his stomach," Flatt said.

The victim's father, also named Jeffray, said: "He's a tough kid. He's been through a lot. He's strong, and he'll pull through."

"Thank God it wasn't anything life threatening," he said.

Both of Jeffray's parents said he has spent a lot of time at the friend's home and there were never any signs of danger from the dog.

"The dog just went mad," Margaret Flatt said. "The family (of the dog) is broken up about it."

Police said Monday the dog was being quarantined for 10 days.

Neither Gourley nor his mother, Theresa Frew, could be reached Tuesday.

"I think it was just a bad, bad accident," Flatt said.

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