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### **RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION INTO THE APRIL 28, 2025 FATAL CRASH AT THE YNOT AFTER SCHOOL CAMP IN CHATHAM, ILLINOIS**

**Springfield, Illinois** – State's Attorney John Milhiser announces the results of the investigation into the fatal crash that occurred at the YNOT After School Camp in Chatham, Illinois on April 28, 2025.

On April 28, 2025, at approximately 3:20 p.m. a vehicle left the roadway and traveled through a field and into the east side of the YNOT After School Camp building located at 301 Breckenridge Road in Chatham, Illinois. Ten children were struck by the vehicle inside the building. Five children were killed: 7-year-old Alma Buhnerkempe, 7-year-old Kathryn Corley, 8-year-old Ainsley Johnson, 8-year-old Bradley Lund, and 18-year-old Rylee Britton. The driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, a 2018 Jeep Wrangler, was 44-year-old Marianne Akers of Chatham. She was uninjured and transported to the hospital for evaluation then later released. The Illinois State Police responded to the scene to assist the Chatham Police Department with the investigation. The Illinois State Police thereafter took over the investigation.

The evidence from the investigation does not support criminal charges in this case. The evidence collected by the Illinois State Police indicates that it was most likely a medical episode (seizure) that caused the driver of the Jeep to veer off the road and into the YNOT building, tragically killing five. Toxicology tests conducted shortly after the crash were negative for drugs or alcohol. There is no evidence establishing this as an intentional act by the driver of the Jeep. Akers left work at her normal time and traveled a normal route home until her Jeep left the roadway and drove through a farm field striking the YNOT building.

Results of the Illinois State Police Traffic Crash Reconstruction Report conclude that as the Jeep left the roadway and drove through the field, the Jeep maintained a speed between 38 and 40 miles per hour. During this time, Akers "applied 100 percent of the accelerator pedal, did not apply the brakes, and the Jeep's Stability Control was engaged." The Report further states that, "An analysis of the event and the Jeep's Stability Control concluded that the vehicle remaining at a relatively constant speed was due to the Jeep's Stability Control being On and Engaged. This limited the Engine Throttle percent, thus limiting the wheel speed, and the vehicle's overall ground speed." According to the

Report “after proceeding through the agricultural field, the Jeep gained speed and collided with the YNOT building at approximately 45 miles per hour.” The Report further states, “As the Jeep proceeded through the building, the Jeep collided with approximately 10 children who were all located inside the building.” The vehicle then exited the building, crossed a gravel road on the west side of YNOT, and “proceeded toward a large wooden light pole. The Jeep collided with the wooden pole.” The Jeep then came to rest against the pole and a fence.

A witness at the scene viewed the Jeep as it crossed the field prior to striking the YNOT building and indicated that he observed the driver of the Jeep slumped with arms extended, and described that it was like “she was taking a nap,” with her head hanging toward the steering wheel. The first two responders to the Jeep who pulled the driver out of the Jeep described her as unresponsive until they woke her, and further indicated that she seemed disoriented and had no memory of what just happened. They described her as confused and that she didn’t know where she was. According to the medical director from the Illinois State Police after a review of the results from subsequent tests at the hospital, Akers showed “objective evidence of seizures,” but there was no evidence to establish the cause of the seizures. At the time of the incident, Akers had a valid driver’s license through the State of Illinois. After the incident, Akers’ driving privileges were cancelled and they remain cancelled.

To establish a criminal offense the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the driver intended to drive her Jeep into the YNOT building, or willfully drove recklessly, or that the driver was under the influence of drugs or alcohol or a combination that caused her to leave the road and crash into the YNOT building, or that the driver was negligent or reckless in driving because of a known medical condition. There is no evidence to support an intentional or knowing act by the driver in this case. There is no evidence that the driver was driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol or a combination. There is no evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the driver acted recklessly or negligently in driving with a known medical condition, such as seizures.

Says State’s Attorney John Milhiser, “Our hearts continue to break for the families impacted by this unimaginable tragedy. Thank you to the medical providers and law enforcement for their response and thorough investigation. We will continue to pray for the families and all of Chatham. This is a horrific case with lives taken and families and a community changed forever.”

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