

X BEACON

CHEAP EATS

A breakfast stop at Citrus was a hit from start to finish.

PAGE 12

Students seek justice for teen slain six years ago



This billboard on Virginia Beach Boulevard near Rosemont Road is the result of efforts by Students for Justice for Shellie, a group organized by Norfolk Academy rising senior Ali Kovac.

Cindy Butler Focke
Correspondent

LYNNHAVEN

It's summer. You'd think most teenagers would want to chill during their break from school. Not Ali Kovac. She's fighting for justice on behalf of someone she's never met.

About 50 people rallied with the 16-year-old in front of a billboard on Virginia Beach Boulevard near Rosemont Road late the afternoon of July 1. They held signs – "Honk for Shellie!" and "Who killed Shellie?" – and

See JUSTICE, Page 16

tip line

Cash rewards of up to \$40,000, in a privately maintained fund, are



offered for tips that lead to the arrest and conviction of Shellie Carson's killer

or killers. Anonymous tips can be made to 385-4241 or justiceforshellie@aol.com. A police spokesman said police are aware of but not involved with this reward.

For more information on Students for Justice for Shellie, visit www.justiceforshellie.com.

JUSTICE

Continued from Page 1

yelled "Justice for Shellie!" at passing vehicles. Some motorists blew their horns, and others pulled into a nearby parking lot to leave donations.

The billboard is the result of efforts by Students for Justice for Shellie, a group or-

ganized by Kovac, a rising Norfolk Academy senior who lives in Saw Pen Point.

It displays a photograph of Shellie Carson, an 18-year-old who was found slain almost six years ago just a mile from her Kings Grant home. It also includes information about a reward and how to provide anonymous tips about the crime.

Carson's killer hasn't been caught. That's why Ivan Kovac, Ali's father, said he contacted the Carsons last year. He could empathize with the couple – his teenage son died in an accident years ago.

Ivan Kovac's generosity helped fund a series of newspaper advertisements seeking new leads in the Aug. 14, 2005, death.

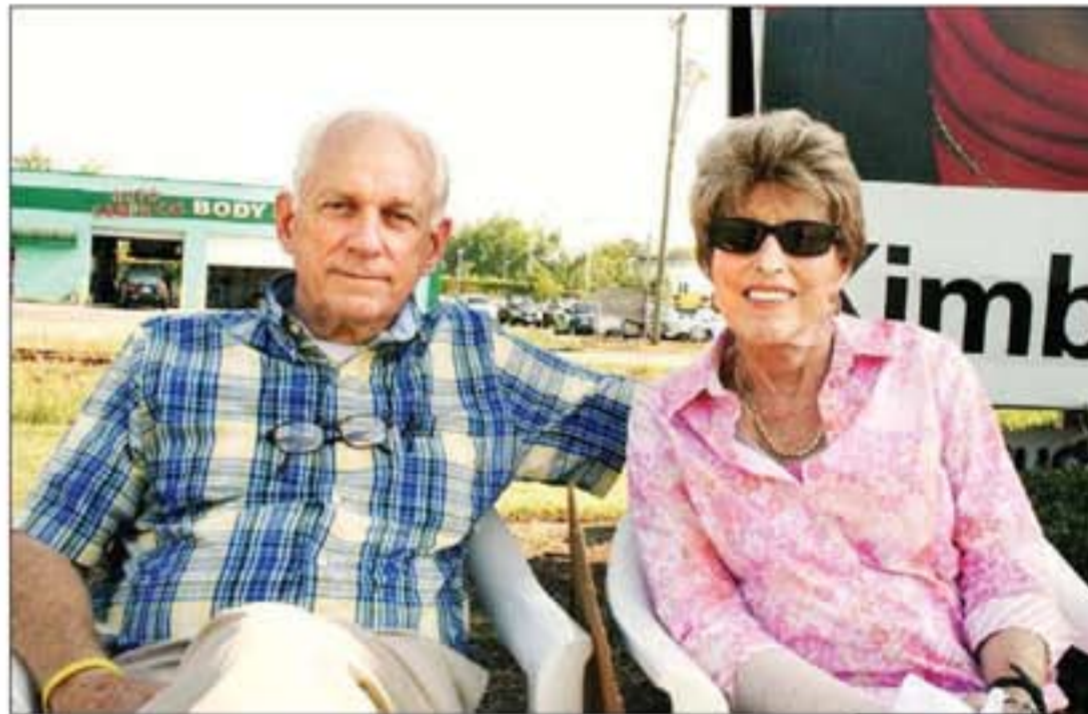
Ali said she wanted to help, too.

more info

Virginia Beach Crime Solvers also offers up to \$1,000 for information leading to an arrest. Callers to 1-888-LOCK-UP (562-5887) may remain anonymous. They also may text "VBTIP" plus a message to 274637 (CRIMES), or visit www.crimesolvers.com.

"It happened near where so many of my friends live. I played soccer near there," she said. "It baffled me how someone could be murdered near a place where I hang out."

And so began a journey to help bring closure to the Carson family. With the blessing of Shellie's parents, Bill and Charlotte Carson, Ali held



CINDY BUTLER FOCKE

Bill and Charlotte Carson attended the July 1 billboard rally. Their nightmare began in 2005 when their 18-year-old daughter was found slain about a mile from their Kings Grant home. Below: Ali Kovac, whose group is helping to fund the billboard campaign.

an initial meeting in May. About 15 attended and brainstormed ideas on how to renew public awareness about the unsolved crime.

Ali's friend, Audrey Batzel, said she didn't think twice about helping.

"It's sad and wrong what happened to her," said the 17-year-old Ocean Lakes High School rising senior. "It could happen to any one of us."

In an effort to reach out to their age group, they used Facebook and Twitter.

And, thanks to upfront funding from the Carsons, the billboard will be up through Oct. 1. The rally brought the group \$629 closer to its \$6,000 goal. Any extra money raised will help fund a recently launched website and a private re-



ward fund.

"It's time for the community to do their part," Ali said.

Kempsville resident Ashley Moy, 18, designed the billboard.

"It's been six years," she

said, "and if people don't bring it back up and make it relevant, it will stay a cold case."

Detective Pat Tucker of the Virginia Beach Police Department's Cold Case Unit said the definition of a cold case is a crime with no investigative leads. "This case has never been a dead end," he said.

Tucker said his unit will continue to investigate all leads and tips that come in. "There is always hope," he said.

The Carsons attended the rally and thanked everyone for not forgetting.

"We are overwhelmed," Shellie's mother said. "It's an answer to our prayers."

Cindy Butler Focke,
butler496@aol.com