

The Columbus Dispatch

9-year-old girl's suicide shocks small Alabama community

By Stephanie Taylor, Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News

Posted Dec 9, 2018 at 8:47 AM

LINDEN, Ala. — An Alabama family is mourning the loss of a 9-year-old girl who took her own life Monday night.

McKenzie Adams' family members said the fourth-grader had been bullied by a group of classmates since the beginning of the school year. Her grandmother found her in their home in Linden on Monday. She had hanged herself.

Instead of planning where to hide Christmas presents for the girl who loved playing with dolls and riding her bike, her family is now planning a funeral.

"It's an emotional roller-coaster," said Edwinna Harris, McKenzie's aunt. Harris, who is a television host in Atlanta, said she wants to use her platform to spread an anti-bullying message to prevent other families from experiencing the same tragedy.

Join the conversation at [Facebook.com/columbusdispatch](https://www.facebook.com/columbusdispatch) and connect with us on [Twitter @DispatchAlerts](https://twitter.com/DispatchAlerts)

McKenzie attended U.S. Jones Elementary School approximately 15 miles away in Demopolis, where her funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Dec. 15. She transferred to the school after her mother and grandmother complained to the State Board of Education that she was being bullied at her elementary school in Linden, Harris said.

Linden is a city of 2,100 residents in west central Alabama, roughly 100 miles west of Montgomery.

McKenzie Nicole Adams was born Aug. 14, 2009. Pretty and smart with an outgoing personality, she loved math and science and wanted to be a scientist, her aunt said. She liked to cheer, take photos and make funny videos with her cousins.

She was learning to play PlayStation 4 games with her cousin and she loved to travel, Harris said. Her favorite places were the beach, the zoo, the McWane Center in Birmingham, and she loved visiting family members.

A lot of the bullying centered on her friendship with a boy, Harris said.

"She was being bullied the entire school year, with words such as 'kill yourself,' 'you think you're white because you ride with that white boy,' 'you ugly,' 'black b-tch,' 'just die,'" she said.

Harris said she intends to speak out against bullying and hopes her efforts can save the lives of other children who feel hopeless.

"God has blessed me to help others with my platform, and now it's time to help. There are so many voiceless kids," she said. "God is opening great doors for justice for my niece."

To get help for yourself or someone else considering suicide, contact the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Hotline at 614-221-5445; the Teen Suicide Prevention Hotline at 614-294-3300; or the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.nationalsuicideline.org/) at 1-800-273-8255/TALK (or 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish speakers). To reach someone at Ohio's 24/7 Crisis Text Line, send 4HOPE to 741741.

