

# Four die in crash: Families, friends recall family killed Friday evening near Medina

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JAMESTOWN — As Shar Berns' husband looked her in the eyes and told her that her best friend, a woman she had come to love in the past eight years, was dead, Berns could hardly muster a response.

"We were supposed to have lunch next Thursday. It just, it just doesn't seem real," she said.

Her friend, Allison Deutscher, 36, along with her husband Aaron, 34, and 18-month-old daughter Brielle, of West Fargo, were killed Friday evening in a head-on collision on Interstate 94 west of Jamestown.

The family was on their way to a weekend at Aaron's parents' house in Bismarck when their 2009 Subaru Forester was struck by a pickup heading the wrong direction in the westbound lane.

The accident occurred at 7:18 p.m. at mile marker 225 of I-94, about 33 miles west of Jamestown, according to the report from North Dakota State Patrol Sgt. Tom Herzig.

The driver of the 1994 Chevrolet pickup, 28-year-old Wyatt Klein of Jamestown, also was killed in the accident.

Herzig said alcohol was a factor in the accident, as authorities smelled alcohol on Klein and in his pickup.

This is a fact Lynn Mickelson, Allison Deutscher's father, is furious about. He said when the patrol officer told him alcohol had been a factor, the thought made him sick to his stomach.

For the three people he "loved to death" to be taken away so abruptly, Mickelson said when the patrol officer first came to his door Friday evening, it was like a dream.

"Shock, pure shock. I didn't think what I was hearing was real," he said. "I kept thinkin' 'not my Allie, they couldn't be talking about my Allie.'"

The accident remains under investigation by the Highway Patrol.

To make matters more heart-breaking for their families, Mickelson said his daughter was 3 1/2 months pregnant.

Eric Mickelson, Allison Deutscher's brother, described his sister as the "friendly, outgoing, energetic person everyone wanted to be around." He said he still has yet to come to terms with the fact that she's gone, but it will be the little things he shared with her that he will miss the most. That, and not being able to see Brielle grow up.

"When she was in high school she took Spanish, which I never did, and the one word she taught me was hola," he said. "And even twenty-some years later, when I would talk to her on the phone the first thing we would say to each other was hola."

Aaron's father, Tom Deutscher, overcome with grief, said it was too difficult to talk about his son, but that he loved Aaron, Allison and Brielle with all his heart.

Friends of the family are also reeling from the loss. Tiffany Bolgrean knew Allison for 15 years, when they both started working together at The Forum.

"She left a little sticky note on my desk when I first started that said 'we're meeting at Rooter's for drinks at 5:01,'" she said with a laugh and then stifled sob. "We were friends ever since, and you honestly couldn't ask for a more spirited, drop-whatever-she's-doing-to-help-ya kind of friend."

Berns also met Allison Deutscher through The Forum, where she worked for over a decade in advertising before she began her job at Clinical Supplies Management, Inc. last January. Aaron Deutscher worked for Phoenix International in information technology.

Berns described Aaron and Allison Deutscher as opposites that attracted to each other. He was the quiet one compared to his wife who loved attending as many concerts as she could. But Bernes said Aaron was a genuine person and an incredible father.

"Seeing the way he changed when Brielle was born, he worked very hard at being the best dad he could be," she said.

Through the tears, the questions, and the grief, one "shining light" from this tragedy, said Lynn Mickelson, was the call he received from the Lions Eye Bank of North Dakota, alerting him that more people can now see because his daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter were organ donors.

"I look at Brielle's picture, and I think how those pretty blue eyes are now someplace else. Those pretty blue eyes are still around," he said.

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