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Student found dead

High School classmates come to grips

By Rachel Crumpler

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The death of a classmate surprised and sobered Oliver Springs High School students. Clayton J. Smith, 17, died Wednesday morning at his mother's home in Oak Ridge. Medical examiner William Bennett said Smith may have died from a drug overdose. Autopsy results should show what drugs might have been involved. "Everybody's in shock. They are destroyed," said Chris Collett, a recent Oliver Springs High School graduate and a good friend of Smith. "He was very good natured. He never intended to hurt anyone." Hacker said the high school students were told about Smith's death Wednesday afternoon. "We're not exactly sure what happened," Oliver Springs High School Principal Terry Hacker said. "It's a really sad situation. We will try to help our kids any way we can," he said. Counselors and pastors from across the county were on hand to help students deal with their loss. Smith was a popular high school senior, active in Christian Athletic meeting and high school sport activities. "He was a good kid, a lovable and respectful kid," Hacker said. "If you had him in a classroom, he could do the work and drive you crazy at the same time." Smith had recently told his guidance counselor that he was thinking about becoming a teacher, Hacker said. Hacker hopes Smith's death will teach a bittersweet lesson to high school students. "Everybody has a purpose in life," Hacker said. "Maybe there's something we can learn from Clayton. We need to open our eyes and ears and hear what he has taught us," he added. Smith's funeral will be held Saturday, Nov. 15, at 8 p.m. the chapel of Sharp Funeral Home. Family will receive friends between 5 and 8 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial and graveside services will be held Sunday, Nov. 16, at 2 p.m. in the Oak Ridge Memorial Park.