

Grandfather Home Releases Statement on Death

Written by Steve Frank

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Yesterday, Grandfather Home for Children released a statement on the apparent drowning death of a 14-year old Raleigh area teen from the home Monday night. CEO Jim Swinkola said "It appears to be a tragic accident, but full investigations are underway." He explained that the boy was a resident of one of Grandfather Home's cottages on the Banner Elk Hayes Campus, just up from the pond, and said the boy "apparently was with his cottage hiking group, disappeared and then was found drowned just below the Mill Pond in Banner Elk." Swinkola said that Grandfather Home is cooperating fully with local authorities and said staff are focused on the emotional wellbeing of other children in the home's care as they process the tragedy and that their concern are also with family and friends of the boy. He asked for prayers "for family, children and staff at Grandfather Home as they deal with this crisis in their lives." Police may not release the name of the boy due to his juvenile status and privacy issues, according to Banner Elk Police Chief Byron Clawson. Clawson said the teen's next of kin were notified of his death Monday night.