

Four-year-old in hospital following abduction, crash

By Brock Weir

A four year old Aurora girl remains in hospital following an alleged parental abduction early Monday morning which ended in a vehicle rollover northwest of Ottawa.

Young Julia Dela Cruz was allegedly abducted by her father, Mario Rodrigues, 35, from her mother's east Aurora home at 4.20 a.m., according to police.

Initially, York Regional Police asked the public to be on the lookout for Mr. Rodrigues' 2008 silver Toyota Sienna, which had been last seen travelling south out of Aurora, noting there was no reason to believe he would attempt to leave the country or that the child would be harmed.

Shortly before 9 a.m., however, Constable Laura Nicolle says that situation changed.

"We responded to the residence in Aurora when the accused forced entry to the home at 4.20 this morning," Constable Nicolle told The Auroran. "The child was removed without the consent of the mother and she called the police from there. Further along, there was new information that increased the concern for the safety of the child and at that point, the Amber Alert was issued."

Following the issuance of the Amber Alert, Ontario's Special Investigations Unit (SIU), the Provincial body called in to investigate incidents of injury and death where police units are involved, say OPP officers near Bancroft spotted the van and attempted to stop it.

"The vehicle managed to evade police and several further attempts were made to stop the vehicle," said Jason Gennaro of SIU Communications. "Around 9.30 a.m., the vehicle was travelling along Paul Martin Drive in Pembroke where it rounded a curve in the road and rolled over."

Julia was transported to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa where, at press time, the SIU continued to monitor her condition to determine the extent of her injuries.

Three investigators, two forensic investigators, and one collision reconstructionist have been assigned to the incident, the SIU notes, urging anyone who may have witnessed the crash to contact the investigators at 1-800-787-8529.

"There was great support [from the community and public] in terms of what I saw," said Constable Nicolle of the Amber Alert. "We had a number of people calling saying they heard the Amber Alert and people who called in to say wherever they were listening to it that it wasn't overly clear and they wanted us to be aware of that. There was a large amount of activity on social media as well with people posting and re-sharing the photos, so support was really great as well as calls and tips."

Mr. Rodrigues was also transported to hospital with minor injuries and arrested.

The investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 1-866-876-5423 x7141, or contact Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS, www.1800222tips.com, or by texting tips to CROMES (274637) starting with the word YORK.