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Teen charged with murder in Columbus shooting was housed at Abraxas Residents often run away from Mansfield-area treatment center

SHELBY - A teen arrested on murder charges in the shooting death of a man outside a Columbus gun show was housed temporarily at Abraxas Ohio, a Mansfield-area teen treatment facility from which residents frequently run away. Javonte Williams, 17, is accused of fatally shooting a 21-year-old man on Sept. 20 in the parking lot of the former Westland Mall in Columbus, according to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. He was at the Abraxas facility, a former seminary on 2775 Ohio 39, until Franklin County deputies took him into custody on an arrest warrant Oct. 27 and transported him to the Richland County Detention Center, according to a Richland County Sheriff's Office report. Williams stayed at the detention center for a little over 24 hours, according to court administrator Brian Bumpus, who confirmed the teen had been committed at Abraxas. So far this year Richland County deputies have investigated 40 runaways from Abraxas, including four teens who fled the facility at Wednesday night. Abraxas is dealing with COVID-19 cases among its residents and staff, a company official said Thursday. Two of the four teens who ran away Wednesday were located by deputies and taken back to the facility the same night. Friday, Ashland police located the other two boys, a 17-year-old Mansfield youth and a 16-year-old boy from Marion, on Center Street in Ashland. The boys were found with a pickup stolen from a resident on Stiving Road, Richland County Sheriff's Capt. Donald Zehner said Friday afternoon. The teens will be taken to the Richland County Detention Center, Zehner said. Authorities have investigated 40 runaways this year at Abraxas Ohio, a former seminary on 2775 Ohio 39 that now serves as a teen residential treatment center. A 17-year-old murder suspect was housed there temporarily in October. Richland County deputies assisted the Franklin County deputies when Williams was taken into custody and transported to the Richland County Detention Center without incident, according to the RCSO report. Williams is charged with a delinquency count of aggravated murder, accused of killing 21-year-old Sage Martin outside the former mall, near the intersection of U.S. Route 40 and Interstate 270 on Columbus' West Side, according to The Dispatch, which reported the teen's arrest on Oct. 29. Monica Hook, vice president of strategic marketing for The GEO Group, Inc., Abraxas' parent company, said in an email statement Thursday that "Abraxas provides open residential treatment services to adolescent males and outpatient treatment services to adolescents and adults. Abraxas has been a valued employer and service provider in Shelby, Ohio, for more than 25 years. Juvenile court systems and agencies throughout the state of Ohio refer individuals to our programs that have co-occurring conditions such as substance use and mental health disorders, family dysfunction, trauma and abuse histories. We utilize multiple evidence- and competency-based curricula, and promote safety and recovery through the active creation of a trauma-informed community." Hook said, "We cannot confirm or deny whether an individual has received services. Individuals receiving treatment services are protected under federal law (42 CFR) and HIPAA." Hook did not respond to specific questions from the News Journal including whether Abraxas is a secure facility.