

# Missing Fort Collins girl found safe



**Jason Pohl, The Coloradoan**

6:07 p.m. MDT May 18, 2015



*(Photo: Courtesy photo)*

The missing 21-year-old Fort Collins woman who has a seizure disorder and prompted a county-wide search was found safe Monday afternoon after reaching out to a friend.

"She's just home safe and that's all that matters right now," said Susanne Fleming, the girl's mother, Monday afternoon. "It's nice to be able to breathe."

Danielle Lewis rode her bike away from her family's home Thursday after having an argument with Fleming. The girl has a seizure disorder and spent a week in the hospital when she was 16. The condition requires medication, and her prescription was slotted to run out Monday, Fleming told the Coloradoan Monday.

"I was like, 'you can't leave.' I tried to get her to come back in..." Fleming said moments before learning her daughter was found safe. "She would love to live on her own, but the fact is, right now, she can't."

"Her thoughts were not clear...we're thinking she may be confused," she said. "...The medicine is not letting her think clearly. She's not processing stuff with a clear frame of mind."

The case presented an interesting situation for law enforcement. On the one hand, the woman is an adult legally capable of making her own decisions and traveling on her own volition. However, her medical condition elevated the case beyond more typical cases where people run away from home or go on a walk-about.

Reports of possible sightings of Lewis trickled in over the weekend. Someone reported seeing her riding her bike Thursday afternoon near Hosetooth Reservoir, and the family on Sunday found what was initially believed to have been the girl's jacket on a trail in Horsetooth Mountain Park.

That jacket was determined to have not been hers, police said Monday.

"She was found safe inside the city of Fort Collins," Officer Matt Johnson said. Police said she called a friend Monday after spending the weekend in the Fort Collins area -- it was not immediately clear where she was for the past four days.

No criminal wrongdoing was suspected, Johnson said. He and other investigators thanked the community's overwhelming support in the search effort.

The break came about noon Monday as Fort Collins police, the lead agency in the investigation, ran out of leads. While investigators had reason to believe that someone must have spotted girl at some point as she traveled, solid tips were sparse and there was no clear starting point to start of more intensive search.

While the efforts mobilized Lewis' family and friends to areas west of the city and resulted in heightened vigilance among responders across Larimer County, the search did not rise to levels seen last year when George Gosden walked away from his Fort Collins home.

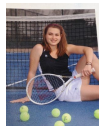
Gosden, who had dementia, died of exposure July 6 in a southeast Fort Collins field -- the day after walking away from his home. After a citywide search that even prompted helicopter patrols resulted in no clues or sightings, [his body was recovered July 14 \(/story/news/local/2014/07/15/missing-mans-body-found/12688631/\)](/story/news/local/2014/07/15/missing-mans-body-found/12688631/) approximately 5 miles southeast of his home.

"He was totally incapacitated," Sgt. Dean Cunningham said of the Gosden search's more heightened sense of immediacy. "That's not the case with her (Lewis). She's functioning."

Fort Collins police and the family continued to work Monday afternoon to identify more clearly where Lewis was for four nights -- details that likely won't be fully revealed for days, and the family spent Monday afternoon rejoicing.

"All I know is she is alive and well," Fleming said.

*Reporter Jason Pohl covers breaking news for the Coloradoan. Follow him on Twitter: @pohl\_jason.*



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