



POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF WINOOSKI

27 West Allen Street
Winooski, VT 05404



Richard Hebert
Chief of Police

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PRESS RELEASE

On Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at approximately 7:17 PM, the Winooski Police Department received a report of four boys who were playing near and in the Winooski River across from the Salmon Hole. One of the boys was reported to have gone under the water. Upon officers arrival they were directed to a nearby beach area by UVM Police. After speaking with several juveniles in the area we were able to determine the boy's name was Ali Muhina and was last seen in the water.

Due to the exigent circumstances officers began gathering information and searching the immediate area. While this was occurring, the juvenile witnesses left the scene. The Winooski Fire Department, Burlington Fire Department, and Colchester Technical Rescue were contacted. Colchester Technical Rescue arrived on scene 16 minutes after the initial call was received.

The search and rescue efforts were hampered by a swollen river due to recent heavy rains. This produced a strong current. Darkness had set in and search and rescue efforts continued until visibility and conditions deteriorated to the point operations were suspended until daylight. The situation had become too dangerous for the divers and support people to safely conduct the search. A detective was with Ali's father throughout the evening. When the search was suspended the detective explained the process to the father and told him the search would continue in the morning.

At the request of Colchester Technical Rescue, the water level in the river was able to be lowered by the Waterbury Reservoir, and Green Mountain Power owned dams upstream on the Winooski River. To lower the water levels it would take approximately 10 hours. Their assistance improved the conditions of the river by improving visibility and overall safety for the search and rescue officers in the water. Overnight the Vermont Search and Rescue Team was contacted and was requested to assist in the search the next morning.

On the morning of July 12, 2017 at approximately 8:00 AM, a unified command center was established. A coordinated effort involving the, Colchester Technical Rescue, Vermont State Police Search and Rescue Team, Winooski Fire Department, and Winooski Police Department ensued. Throughout the day, Winooski Police Detective Nease, with the assistance of Association of Africans Living in Vermont and Vermont Refugee Resettlement Center, stayed in constant contact with the family.



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At approximately 4:00 PM, a diver from the Colchester Technical Rescue team advised he had recovered Ali from the water. He was found approximately 500 yards downstream from where he was last seen. The water in this area is approximately 12 feet deep.

The investigation is continuing. If anyone was a witness to this incident who has not yet spoken to the Winooski Police Department you are encouraged to contact us at (802) 655-0221.

The Winooski Police Department would like to extend its appreciation to all who assisted in the search and recovery of Ali Muhina. It would not have been possible to recover Ali so quickly without the resources, personnel and dedication of the:

University of Vermont Police Services Officers
City of Winooski Fire Department
Burlington Fire Department
Colchester Technical Rescue Team
Vermont State Police Search and Rescue Team including Command Staff
Green Mountain Power
Waterbury Reservoir
Association of Africans Living in Vermont
Refugee Resettlement Center

On behalf of the entire staff that serves the City of Winooski, we extend our deepest condolences to the family, relatives, and friends of Ali Muhina.

Scott D McGivern
Lieutenant
Winooski Police