



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Police Department

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DATE: 01/13/2012
NATURE OF INCIDENT: School Bus Accident
CASE NO.: 12006628
INCIDENT DATE :01/12/2012
INCIDENT TIME: 4:01PM
INCIDENT LOCATION: Missouri Avenue & Lyons Street
SUBJECT: School Bus Accident Update
BY: DPD Public Information Officer Jim Hansen

On 1/12/2012 at 4:01pm, emergency personnel responded to the area of Missouri Avenue and Lyons Street on a report of a single-vehicle crash involving a Voyageur School Bus.

Upon arrival the female driver of the bus, Debra Stephenson, 58 of Duluth, was found lying on ground outside the bus and appeared to be experiencing a medical episode. Stephenson was transported to Essential Health-Saint Mary's Medical Center where she was treated and remains there in good condition. 27 students from Lowell Elementary School were on board the bus. One of the students received a minor arm injury from flying glass while the remaining students reported no injury.

A subsequent investigation by the Duluth Police Department Crash Investigation Unit determined that the bus was traveling east on Lyons Street before making a left turn onto Missouri Avenue. At some point as the bus was making the left turn, the driver experienced a medical episode which caused her to become incapacitated. The bus continued to make the turn and drove off the roadway several feet up a hill into a yard. The bus eventually came to a stop and then rolled backwards approximately 300 feet through an adjacent yard coming to rest against a tree in the yard of 206 Lyons Street. The school bus sustained moderate damage. A home at 206 Lyons Street sustained minor damage along with 2 trees and a row of shrubs.

A further investigation conducted today by the Duluth Police Department including an inspection of the school bus determined that the brakes were fully functional, there were no mechanical malfunctions with the bus and it was in good working order. Excessive speed, weather and road conditions, as well as driver impairment have also been ruled out as contributing factors. Investigators have determined that the medical episode experienced by Stephenson caused this crash.

No further information regarding the driver's medical episode or driver's condition can be released by the Duluth Police Department.