



TARA ENGBERG

**SCENE OF TRAGEDY** Cops examine accident site, which is protected by sheets of plastic yesterday. Later, relatives of boy built shrine near where he was hit.

# SHE SEES SON DIE

## They held hands as runaway car hit him

By RUTH BASHINSKY, JONATHAN LEMIRE and GREG GITTRICH  
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A 5-year-old boy walking hand in hand with his mother outside a Queens school was crushed to death yesterday when an out-of-control car roared onto a sidewalk full of kids.

"My baby! My baby!" screamed Christian Plaza's mother, Monica Orellana, after the car smashed into her son just steps away from Public School 92 in Corona at 8:15 a.m.

Orellana pounded on the body of the car and pleaded for Christian to "wake up," witnesses said.

"They were holding hands," added Monica Garcia, the mother of a first-grader. "And then the car took the kid away."

Christian's small body was pinned between the car and a brick pillar for a school gate, according to police.

"I saw the little boy facing down underneath the car," said Lesly Pasato, who was walking her 6-year-old son to school.

"When they lifted the child onto the hood of the car and took his hat off," Pasato said, it was obvious the boy could not be saved.

The driver of the car, Rosario Chauca, 42, had just dropped off her 7-year-old son, Oscar, and was attempting to pull out of a parking spot on Northern Blvd., she said.

But she did not realize her car was in reverse. When she stepped on the gas, the car hurtled backward onto the sidewalk,

several mothers and their children, as well as teachers, sobbed outside the school.

"Lo siento. Lo siento," Chauca repeated, saying "I'm sorry, I'm sorry" to everyone in Spanish.

Christian, who lived only three blocks from PS 92, was declared dead at the school, where he attended kindergarten.

His mother and Chauca were both taken by ambulance to Elmhurst Hospital Center for observation. Another mother and child suffered minor injuries and were also treated at Elmhurst.

Police said no charges would be filed against Chauca, terming Christian's death an accident.

Christian's mother and father returned to the school yesterday afternoon, where their relatives had set up a makeshift memorial of flowers and candles.

Wailing, Orellana knelt down by the tribute. Overcome with grief, she collapsed onto the sidewalk where Christian died.

"I just want to see my son again," said Ramiro Plaza, a Manhattan handyman who moved with his wife to New York from Ecuador six years ago.

"I think that I am dreaming," he said. "I wish it didn't happen."

Schools Chancellor Joel Klein said through a spokeswoman that he was "very saddened" by the death. Klein made counseling available for the school's students, as well as teachers and parents.

Less than a mile away, Chauca was sprawled on a sofa in her living room.

She was crying hysterically. "She's never had trouble with the car before," said her 16-year-old daughter, Jessica. "She feels terrible for what happened. She still doesn't know how it happened."



Christian Plaza

police said.

"It wasn't my fault," Chauca cried after she hurried out from behind the wheel of her gold Toyota Camry, witnesses said.

"I brake. I brake," Chauca sobbed, according to witnesses. "It didn't work."

Chauca got back into the car and tried to ease it off Christian's body but she could not. An unidentified man then got behind the wheel and moved the car away, a witness said.

Shaken by the sickening crash,



COREY SIPKIN DAILY NEWS

**DEVASTATED** Monica Orellana is comforted by friend after son Christian Plaza was killed by car as she walked with him.