

## **Statement on the fatality of Anna Loera**

**Date Issued: April 5, 2021**

On January 20, 2020, the Department received a report alleging Anna Loera's father, Rafael Loera, was neglecting one of his children. The report alleged the child was left alone for extended periods of time and was not being properly cared for. The DCS investigation found evidence to support the allegation. The Department removed the child from the home and placed the child into foster care.

During the January 20 investigation, DCS learned the child had three other siblings. Mr. Loera reported that two of the siblings were living in another state and another sibling, Anna, was allegedly living in another country. DCS contacted Child Protective Services in the state where they were living with their mother, Maribel Loera. The CPS workers made contact with the mother and two children on January 27, 2020. DCS obtained a court authorized removal and notified the other state's CPS. When the CPS workers returned to the home to remove the children the next day, a neighbor informed them that the family had left town.

After hearing Ms. Loera and the children left the other state, DCS specialists visited the Loera's home in Phoenix where they located the two siblings.

On January 28, 2020, DCS took custody of the two siblings. Shortly after the children were removed from the home, Mr. Loera set the house on fire. The Phoenix Fire Department responded to the home after a 911 call was placed. While at the home, the fire department discovered skeletal remains.

On January 29, 2020, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received information indicating skeletal remains were found in the home, presumably those of 13-year-old Anna Loera. DCS also learned Mr. Loera admitted to law enforcement that he was aware of Anna's death.

Mr. and Mrs. Loera were charged with first degree murder on March 31, 2021.

The children remain in DCS care.

The Department is grateful for the service of our own investigator who did not give up on finding all remaining children after one of Anna's siblings was discovered in a state of neglect.

DCS has the following history with Anna Loera:

On December 8, 2009, the Department received a report alleging Anna was neglected by her biological mother. The report alleged that Anna's mother could not provide adequate housing or

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meet the daily needs of her child. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

On February 15, 2010, the Department received a report alleging Anna was neglected by her biological mother. The report alleged that Anna's mother could not provide adequate housing or meet the daily needs of her child. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

Mr. and Mrs. Loera were licensed foster parents in Arizona until 2016.

While they were foster parents, DCS received the following reports on Anna, Rafael, or Maribel Loera:

On February 18, 2013, the Department received a report alleging Anna was physically abused by an unknown person. The report alleged Anna arrived at the hospital with a black eye. Anna was examined at the hospital and doctors did not find additional injuries. Anna received a forensic interview where she denied any abuse in her home. Anna stated that she received the injury at daycare after her head struck a desk. The Phoenix Police Department also investigated the allegation and did not find evidence that Mr. or Mrs. Loera caused the injury. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegation. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

On October 1, 2014, the Department received a report alleging Mr. and Mrs. Loera physically abused a child. The report alleged the child had two bruises on the child's back and several scratches. Both Phoenix Police and DCS investigated the allegations. When interviewing the child, the DCS investigator did not find any bruises on the child and only found one small scratch. Neither the police nor the DCS investigation found evidence to support the allegation. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

Mr. and Mrs. Loera's foster license expired in 2016. DCS did not receive any reports on the family until the January 20, 2020 report.