

Poly grad shot to death

Crime: Paul Griego, 17, praised by family, who says he had no enemies.

By David Rogers

Staff writer

LONG BEACH — A recent Poly High School graduate was fatally shot while looking at a used car for sale and less than two weeks before his 18th birthday, police said Sunday.

Paul Griego was talking with the seller of the car when they were both shot by two males on bicycles at about 11:30 p.m. Saturday, said Sgt. Paul LeBaron of the Long Beach Police Department.

Paramedics tried to save Grie-

go's life, but he was pronounced dead at the scene in the 6000 block of Cherry Avenue just before 11:45 p.m., said Lt. Fred Corral of the Los Angeles County coroner's office.

The vehicle's owner, a man whose name was not released, was taken to a hospital where he was listed in critical but stable condition, LeBaron said.

Police did not have a motive for the shooting, but were investigating whether the shooters were gang members, LeBaron said.

Griego would have turned 18 on July 19. Family members said he was a gregarious, friendly young man who was happy to lend a hand and had no enemies.

"He had been working two jobs to save up money for his first car," said his aunt, Lorraine Griego, who teaches at Roosevelt Elementary School across from Poly. "A good offer came along, and he wanted to check out the car and was talking with the owner and he got shot."

"He was everyone's friend, the best godson and nephew I could ever have," she said. "Everyone he came in touch with became good friends with him. My principal at my school would depend on him to help her with projects."

Paul Griego's cousin, Keith Adams, agreed.

"(His family) worked so hard to keep him on the straight and

narrow, and they did," Adams said.

Griego was planning to attend Long Beach City College in the fall.

He was interested in studying marine biology but had also learned to install car stereos and alarms so he could make money to become self-sufficient. He had also interviewed at a data processing company the week before, and a second interview was planned.

"He had dreams, but he knew he had to support himself," his aunt said. "He was working for the money to buy his own car so he didn't need rides everywhere. ... He was in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Funeral plans are pending.

