

# The State News

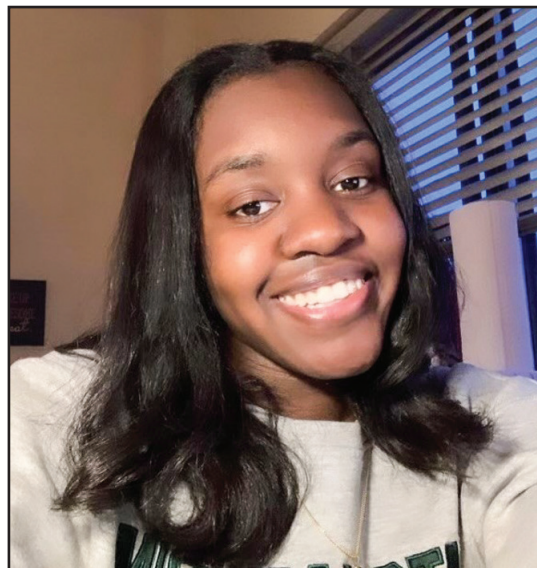
Michigan State's Independent Voice



## REMEMBERING



Alexandria Verner



Arielle Anderson



Brian Fraser



**Brave  
Resilient  
United**

**We stand with MSU  
#SpartanStrong**



# The State News

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

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Brian Fraser's Phi Delta Theta brothers knelt in front of the memorial for him, Alexandria Verner and Arielle Anderson, during a vigil on Wednesday, Feb. 15. Thousands gathered at the Rock on Farm Lane to honor the three victims of, and the five hospitalized by, Michigan State University's mass shooting on Feb. 13, 2023. Photo by Chloe Trofatter

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COVER: Flowers and signage supporting the MSU community and honoring the victims of MSU's mass shooting surround the Spartan Statue on Feb. 21, 2023. Photo by Audrey Richardson

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Our hearts go out to the MSU community as we move forward together.



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# What you need to know about the MSU shooting



An overhead view of the first responders that arrived to the MSU Union after a shooting on Michigan State University's campus on the night of Feb. 13, 2023. Photo by Audrey Richardson

East Lansing Police Department vehicles park outside Berkey Hall after the mass shooting on Monday, Feb. 13, 2023, in Michigan State University's North Neighborhood. Photo by Chloe Trofatter



## What Happened

- The shooting began in Berkey Hall around 8:18 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 13.
- Police on scene found two deceased victims at the building.
- A short time later, the shooter moved to the MSU Union, where one more victim was killed.
- In response to the situation, a shelter-in-place order was issued around 8:30 p.m. It was lifted shortly after midnight.
- The shooter died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Lansing.
- By 1 a.m., three students were dead and five were critically injured at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

## The Victims

- Biology junior Alexandria Verner of Clawson, junior Arielle Anderson of Grosse Pointe and business sophomore Brian Fraser of Grosse Pointe were identified as the three students found dead at Berkey Hall and the MSU Union.
- Five students were critically injured and are being treated at Sparrow Hospital.
- Hospitality business junior Guadalupe Huapilla-Perez, environmental biology/zoology junior Nate Statly and Chinese international student John Hao are among the injured.
- The two other injured students' names have not been released. One of these students is also an international student from China.
- As of Wednesday, Feb. 22, one student was in fair condition, three students were in serious but stable condition and one student remained in critical condition.
- MSU said it will pay the funeral expenses for the deceased students and hospital bills for all five injured students.

## The Shooter

- The shooter was identified as a 43-year-old man from Lansing who was not affiliated with Michigan State University. The State News is choosing not to repeat his name.
- A motive has not been determined by police. A note in the shooter's wallet may indicate one, but it is currently unsubstantiated, according to police.
- Police determined it was an "isolated incident," after interviewing the shooter's father. This means the shooter was the only threat.
- Police found two 9 mm pistols, eight loaded magazines and a pouch containing 50 rounds of loose ammunition on the shooter after his death.
- At the shooter's home, a cell phone, journals with various writings and another 9 mm pistol were found.

## For Students

- Berkey Hall and the MSU Union will remain closed for the remainder of the semester.
- MSU will offer a credit/no credit grade reporting option for undergraduate classes.



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# B/A Florist provides memorial flowers, focuses on family, community, comfort for MSU students

By Devin Anderson-Torrez and Maddy Warren  
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Five days before Valentine's Day, the basement of B/A Florist was organized chaos.

Feet marched up and down the stairs, guiding flowers to their next stop. Hands traded vases, scissors trimmed eucalyptus and the phone rang off the hook. Sharing the workstation with several others, owner Laurie Van Ark focused on a large same-day arrangement that took up the width of her table.

It was busy — but calculated. It was a stark contrast to the calm and quiet store just above that has become a staple of the mid-Michigan community since 1979, when it was founded by Barbara Ann Hollowick.

"My mother always loved to grow plants and she started a very small business out of her home when I was a teenager," Van Ark said. "At one point, she decided to add a flower cooler just to see if it would increase sales and that part of the business is what took off."

On Valentine's Day, the flower shop is normally filled with community members and college students searching for bouquets for significant others and loved ones.

This year was different.

While there were still a few students picking up flowers for the holiday celebrating love, the majority were there to find botanicals to bring to the Spartan Statue and The Rock on Farm Lane, which are now memorial spots since the Feb. 13 on-campus mass shooting that took the lives of three MSU students, Arielle Anderson, Brian Fraser and Alexandria Verner.

"I've done this so long and gone through so many Valentine's Days, that it was just such a shocking experience to have that instantly taken away," Van Ark said. "It was almost non-existent. I mean, yes, there were some (buying flowers for the holiday) but nothing like it normally is ... It was so somber in here."

Ahead of the vigil at The Rock on Feb. 15, Van Ark said the shop was packed with MSU students purchasing flowers in memory of classmates and sharing their experiences with the employees.

"It's been so emotional," Van Ark said. "It's kind of — I don't even know how to put it, an odd sort of experience in that, I wasn't there, but we've heard so many first accounts of these students and what they've experienced, that, in a way, it feels like we were there."

In addition to owning the shop, Van Ark is a Michigan State alumna and mother. Although her children did not attend MSU, they went



B/A Florist owner Laurie Van Ark works next to her daughter Olivia Van Ark in the basement on Feb. 9, 2023. Olivia Van Ark is the third generation in the family to work at the shop since her grandmother Barbara Ann Hollowick founded it in 1979. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez

to other colleges in Michigan.

"Unfortunately, (it's) a lot of parents' concern, you know, sending your child away and wanting them to be safe," Van Ark said. "These young people — you're in such an important part of your life, that's going to shape the direction you head. And to have these things happen, it's almost like you are being robbed of your innocence and it just breaks my heart as a parent."

## THE STAPLE ON THE CORNER

As the business grew in the 1980s, the need for relocation to a bigger store did, too.

B/A Florist relocated to its current East Lansing location on the corner of Grand River Avenue and Hagadorn Road in 1984.

"I used to walk by here all the time as an MSU student wondering what it looked like inside," Van Ark said. "So, when we finally got to see the inside it was as charming as you could imagine ... We loved the cozy feeling that it had and we have always wanted our store to feel good when people walk into it."

Van Ark started working at the shop full-time after graduating from Michigan State the same year, dedicated to creating a comforting atmosphere for all of East Lansing.

"I never once felt unsafe (at MSU)," Van Ark said. "Never. It's not even a thought. It's just such a different world now, and I think everyone is numb trying to process how to go forward."

After Hollowick retired and Van Ark became a second-generation owner of the store in 2012, Hollowick has contributed handmade quilts that stretch across parts of the store, adding to the comfortable feeling that they were aiming for, even more so after Monday's tragedy.

"It means a lot; It's my mother's legacy," Van Ark said. "I'm very happy and proud to see (it) continue."

Throughout the days that followed the shooting, Van Ark said strangers were talking, hugging and wishing for each other's safety inside the shop.

"I heard a lot of people say that it felt warm and cozy in here — and, you know, I guess in a way, it made me feel good that it gave them a little bit of comfort," Van Ark said. "The

mom in me kicks in."

## FOSTERING COMMUNITY

The legacy has been one of fleeting interactions that create lasting memories.

Some of Van Ark's favorite moments in the store come from the stories that her customers share with her, sharing a glimpse of their lives and using her flowers as a means of communication.

B/A Florist provided flowers during the Spartan Sunday volunteer event on Feb. 19 that intended to cheer up students as they returned to campus for classes.

"I am happy the flowers give them something beautiful to focus on, because they're doing it to lift the spirits of their classmates," Van Ark said. "I'm happy that my business had some role in helping them to feel that they were somewhere where they were safe."

Van Ark thinks back through the last 44 years of business and the bonds that have resulted: all the returning customers who came for proms and then weddings, baby showers and then anniversaries, the first-timers who had always passed by the shop but never stopped in.

Valentine's Day generally brings in extra help for the flower shop, it's the biggest holiday of the year for it. While this Valentine's Day was not focused on romance but grieving, the process remained the same.

"I think there's just something very timeless about them," recent graduate and B/A Florist worker Abigail Ording said. "Today, in a world where everything is very, like, plastic and everything can feel fake at times, it's nice to get something real, something natural like flowers and to bring a little bit of nature into your home."

This kind of sentiment has propelled the shop for years and will continue to do so for years to come, allowing the folks of B/A Florist to continue to leave their impression on the East Lansing community.

"Growing up in it, I have come to see how important it is to be so integrated with your community and it's just a wonderful feeling," Van Ark said. "We love being a part of our community, so we really try to foster those kinds of relationships."

# SPARTAN STRONG



Proceeds from the sale of the  
Spartan Strong t-shirt will go toward  
the Spartan Strong Fund.

[go.msu.edu/SpartanStrong](https://go.msu.edu/SpartanStrong)



# COLUMN: Why Tom Izzo's words are so comforting for grieving Spartans

By Sam Sklar  
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We all have our own Tom Izzo stories: The moment you first got to meet him, shake his hand and hear his frequently raspy voice in-person. Everyone remembers it.

For me, it was in the summer of 2019, when I was in East Lansing for a few days with my dad. It was one day before my freshman orientation, so we decided to take a walk around campus, since the only other time I had ever seen it was a snowy November weekend.

Seemingly out of nowhere, a golf cart whizzed by as we stood at an intersection. It was men's basketball Head Coach Tom Izzo.

My dad and I were in awe. In just my second time ever on campus, I got to see one of the greatest college basketball coaches of all time.

Izzo has been Michigan State's basketball coach for nearly 30 years. He's won numerous Big Ten titles, advanced to eight Final Fours, raised a national championship banner and graduated countless Spartans.

Rather than running up and down the sidelines of a packed Breslin Center, chewing out an official for a missed call against Minnesota on Feb. 15, he was tasked with guiding not only his own team, but an entire MSU community through something that doesn't exist on any head coaching job applications.

Izzo spoke at the vigil on Feb. 15, trying to put together his best words to enlighten and repair a wounded community. However, one of the first things he said on the breezy steps of the Fairchild Theatre was a lie.

"Wow," Izzo said, then releasing a sigh. "I normally speak more off the cuff, but you're following the governor, the president, the doctors and you're just a basketball coach, (so) I decided to put a little

more into it."

Did he put more into his seven-minute speech than he would at any ordinary press conference? Yes. Is he just a basketball coach? No way.

I'm an out-of-state student, one that didn't start closely following MSU's men's basketball team until the 2019 Final Four appearance that I attended as a senior in high school. Having me say today that Izzo is more than just a basketball coach doesn't mean anything. Any Spartan, Michigander or college basketball fan already knows that. I was quick to realize it.

But when three of my fellow Spartans were killed and five others were critically injured, I found myself putting my neutral sports reporter instincts aside and fell back into my seat as a Michigan State student. It's Izzo's words among the many statements and speeches from community leaders that I sought out the most. Perhaps it was my sports-wired mind, but I know there were plenty of other Spartans — students or alumni — feeling the exact same way.

"Well, there were a lot (of people) that I saw that weren't holding back tears," Izzo said of speaking at the vigil, followed by a long, silent pause. "I'm honored that you'd say, 'my people.' That means you've been here a long time. But I was overwhelmed, to be honest with you, standing there looking out over that crowd. What a tribute to those three students. What a tribute to Michigan State. What a tribute to their families that people cared enough ... You're right, I've been through some celebrations. I've been through some tough times, but that was one of the more moving moments in my career. It really was."

That Monday night, he received the same frightening news that countless other Spartan parents heard too. His

son, Steven, a senior and walk-on to the basketball team, was in danger too.

Steven Izzo had driven to the MSU Union to pick up his girlfriend from class when a police officer stopped him and ordered him to turn around. He retreated to the familiar confines of the Breslin Center, where he barricaded in a suite inside the arena before later moving downstairs with staff members to the weight room and alumni locker room.

Meanwhile, Tom Izzo had been at home after recording his weekly radio show earlier in the night. On any other night, he likely would've been at the Breslin Center, instead of sheltering at his home where he listened to the news and prayed his son and others near and dear to him and would make it out safely.

"It was fairly traumatizing for Steven," Tom Izzo said. "I thought he was okay and then yesterday he had some moments and some people really helped him out. So I was greatly appreciative of that."

Shortly before making his speech at the vigil, Izzo stopped by The Rock on Farm Lane, where numerous people silently circled around the painted names of the three killed: Brian Fraser, Arielle Anderson and Alexandria Verner. To his left stood a group of boys, some of which were hugging each other, uncontrollably emotional and wearing Phi Delta Theta shirts — the fraternity in which Fraser was the president.

"There were some people that just couldn't hold it in and I said, 'Did you know somebody?'" Izzo said. "A couple said yes and a couple said no, and that was pretty powerful."

Izzo worked an insurmountable task of preparing his players for the Saturday night rivalry match at Michigan. No coach or player is properly trained for it. There's



Men's basketball Head Coach Tom Izzo gets emotional while Michigan's band plays the MSU alma mater to honor the university and the three Spartans lost during the mass shooting on Feb. 13, 2023. The rivalry matchup was MSU's first game back. The Wolverines ultimately beat the Spartans 84-72. Photo by Chloe Trofatter

no playbook or user manual on how anyone can effectively recover from tragedy, or when the appropriate time is to start moving on.

But sports are what unite, even in a rivalry that's turned suddenly nasty. It's part of why the game was played — to bring a sense of normalcy for those that need it.

"That'll be the hard part," Izzo said of his expectations for Saturday. "Game could start, we could get off to a great start,

or we could lay an egg. I don't know."

University of Michigan ended up taking the rivalry game 84-72, but the results took a back seat to the camaraderie that the rivals showed Saturday night.

Izzo's ability to win basketball games is what has kept him in East Lansing for longer than I've been alive. Sure, the last three seasons haven't been all that spectacular to the standards Izzo has built, but that must be pushed aside.

His humility as a person is what touches many so dearly and why people — including me — are proud to wear the green and white and call themselves Spartans.

Tom Izzo, the person, overtook Tom Izzo, the coach, this week — when Michigan State needed it the most.

It's OK if you shed a tear watching his Wednesday night remarks. I know I almost did.

Spartan Nation,  
We're with **YOU** every  
step of the way ...  
today and every day.

**YOU** inspire us.

**YOU** make EL Home.

Go Green, Always.



# THE THREE THAT WE LOST: ARIELLE ANDERSON

By SaMya Overall  
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**B**rian Fraser, Alexandria Verner, Arielle Anderson. Since Feb. 13, the three Spartan victims who were taken from their families, our campus and our community have been heavy in our hearts.

Though they are memorialized through many tearful vigils, supportive signs and tense protests, we recognize that none of this can bring them back. It doesn't take the pain away from this act of violence.

The State News offers our sincerest condolences and the most comfort that we can provide during this difficult time to those most affected, including the loved ones of Brian, Alexandria and Arielle.

## ARIELLE ANDERSON

Anderson, a Grosse Pointe native and a MSU junior, was known for her aspirations to tend to the health and welfare of others as a surgeon. She was passionate about helping friends and family, particularly children.

In fact, Anderson once told her grandmother, April Davis, that when she became a doctor she would help take care of her aunt, who is disabled.

"She just has so much passion ... I just I'm still trying to grasp it," Davis told the Detroit Free Press last week.

Kind, caring and voted "Most likely to succeed" in eighth grade, Anderson is remembered fondly by her family and friends, who have wished to remain private as they grieved.

Anderson was their "precious daughter, granddaughter, sister, niece, cousin, and friend," her family said in an Instagram post.

She was also hardworking, her family said. She was planning on graduating early, and participated in summer programs working with senior citizens.

## BRIAN FRASER

Fraser, also a Grosse Pointe native, was a sophomore studying business and the Chapter President of Phi Delta Theta. Clearly loved by his fraternity, Fraser was a leader

on campus who embodied a "contagious smile" and was "charismatic and caring."

More than 50 members of MSU's chapter of Phi Delta Theta shared their tributes to Fraser. "True brotherhood," "welcoming," "respect" and "kindness" are only a few of the adjectives used to describe him.

"It's been really hard, I can't lie," social work sophomore Macy Clymer, who is Fraser's friend, said. "It's something I never thought I would experience, which is jarring, and I'm trying to get used to it, but we're just trying to hang around everyone who knew him and keep talking about him."

Clymer only knew Fraser for seven months from when he lived on the floor of the same hall Clymer's best friend lived. They, along with Fraser, would hang out every day.

When thinking about the first time her and Fraser actually talked, Clymer remembers the kindness that his fraternity brothers knew.

"I was at a party ... it was on Halloween, and I had a really bad day — I was almost in tears," Clymer said. "He, like, pulled me away and just gave me the biggest hug. I'd barely talked to him before. ... He looked me in the eyes and he says, 'It's going to be okay.' You can't be sad when you look at his smile. There's something about his smile that just made me feel better instantly ... that was my first real interaction with Brian and I knew I wanted him in my life forever."

A memorial scholarship with Fraser's name was created.

## ALEXANDRIA VERNER

Verner, a biology junior and Clawson native, was a league MVP basketball, volleyball and all-state softball player. Known as a leader both on and off the courts, Verner is loved by her parents, sister, brother and the entire Clawson Public Schools community.

Verner's basketball coach Kelly Horne met Verner when she was in kindergarten. She played in the "little kid's basketball league" along with her siblings, a time that Horne recalls fondly.

When Horne took over Clawson's high school varsity basketball team, Verner was a senior.

"She was our leader on and off the court," Horne said. "My seniors right now played on JV while Al was a senior. They're taking it pretty hard, and that just shows you what type of leader she was."

Clawson superintendent Billy Shellenbarger recalls when he met Verner as co-varsity basketball coach.

Known fondly by her nickname, Al, she "exemplified kindness every day of her life," her former superintendent wrote. Those close to her remember her as sweet, caring, funny, smart and above all, genuine.

"In a small school of only 400, when you have someone who is such high character and a high integrity kiddo like Al is, from start to finish, you tend to migrate towards that student," Shellenbarger said.

Shellenbarger knew all three of the Verner children, including Alexandria's brother and sister, TJ and Charlie. As a family friend and Verner's principal while she was in high school, he remembers cheering for Verner at her games, recommending her for heads of clubs and admiring her active role at Clawson High School.

"She was a constant leader, even as a sophomore," Shellenbarger said. "Very quiet, very modest, very humble but her leadership was loud."

Verner's family has set up a memorial fund with Alliance Catholic Credit Union, where donations can be made.

## STRONG, TOGETHER

The MSU community has come together to honor our departed Spartans in remembrance, anger, confusion and, most of all, grief. From alumni-supported events to somber candlelight vigils, their legacy continues to breathe air into our broken campus.

They will never be forgotten.

The State News will always stand with the families and friends of Brian Fraser, Arielle Anderson and Alexandria Verner.

Managing Editor Drew Goretzka and reporters Vivian Barrett, Maddy Warren and Hannah Woehrle contributed to this article.



Photo courtesy of Phi Delta Theta

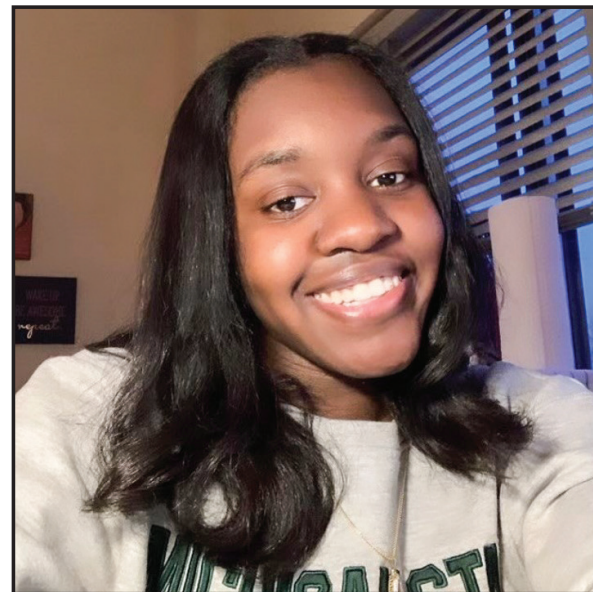


Photo courtesy of the family of Arielle Anderson



Photo courtesy of Clawson Public Schools



# ON, ALEXANDRIA VERNER AND BRIAN FRASER



A Michigan fan shows their support for Michigan State ahead of their game on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, at the Crisler Center. The rivalry matchup was MSU's first game back after the mass shooting on Feb. 13. The Wolverines ultimately beat the Spartans, 84-72. Photo by Chloe Trofatter



Sociology graduate student Kitty Groeller, chemistry junior Rylee Warner and creative advertising freshman Jasmyn Miller return flowers to the base of The Rock on Farm Lane, after painting over it on Feb. 15, 2023. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez



Students leave flowers at the foot of the Spartan statue on Feb. 14, 2023, one day after a mass shooting took place in Michigan State University's North Neighborhood. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez



Flowers, signs and candles fill the base of the Spartan Statue on Feb. 19, 2023. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez



MSU students light candles at The Rock on Farm Lane for a vigil that took place on campus on Feb. 15, 2023. Michigan representatives, MSU Interim President Teresa Woodruff and ASMSU President Jo Kovach were some of the speakers that expressed their sympathy for the victims, injured and the MSU community. Photo by Audrey Richardson



A student leaves rocks with positive messages around the Spartan Statue on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, for Spartan Sunday – an event organized by alumni and Spartan parents to welcome students and faculty back to campus. Photo by Chloe Trofatter



Moms scattered throughout campus offering "Free Mom Hugs" to anyone that needed the extra comfort on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, for Spartan Sunday – an event organized by alumni and Spartan parents to welcome students and faculty back to campus. "This is love and strength; this is making our community stronger," Thuy Sabo, an alumni and Spartan parent, said. Photo by Chloe Trofatter

# Students sit down at 'Skip Class, Stand Up' protest

By Liz Nass

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Psychology junior Maya Manuel stepped up to a podium outside of the Michigan State Capitol on a cold February day.

"Who needs a moment to breathe?" Manuel asked the crowd in front of her.

Then, she, along with hundreds of other students in the crowd watching her took a deep breath in and then out.

This was the beginning of the protest that took place on the afternoon of Monday, Feb. 20 — the third protest in a week about gun violence and since the mass shooting on Michigan State University's campus which left three students dead and five hospitalized.

Thousands of students gathered for the rally, called "Skip Class, Stand Up." in which attendees sat in a commonly-taught formation used during lock-down drills in schools. Together, the students introduced themselves and mourned together.

Across the Capitol's lawn, people handed out "Spartan Strong" bracelets while others allowed for students to pet their dog, some having

heartfelt conversations with strangers during it. Signs filled the spaces in the crowd, and when the organizers called for the attendees to hug and talk to one another, they did.

"When I say that if you guys don't show up to every event, anything you see is advocacy of what is happening right now," Manuel said. "We are part of our own silencing. We can't continue to do that to ourselves because we are the future. We are the voices that will be put out there."

March for Our Lives founder and Parkland High School shooting survivor David Hogg came to the protest to talk to the students from a relatable point of view, but also to inspire them to want to create change by voting, running for state legislature and addressing gun violence head on.

Hogg said, as a generation, the students need to cut through religious and racial lines to come together and make progress. He also addressed those who use their constitutional rights as an excuse to not address gun control.

"I don't know what constitution many other of these people who seem to think that (gun violence) is impossible to address read, but



Hollow eyes stare into cameras as MSU students line the front of Michigan State Capitol as they would in classrooms during a protest against gun violence on Feb. 15, 2023. Many Spartans shared their grief to the crowd during the protest. "This should not be a part of my job," ASMSU President Jo Kovach said. Photo by Audrey Richardson

the one that I read talks about the domestic tranquility and ensuring it for every single American," Hogg said in his speech. "Do we feel like we have that right now? No, absolutely not."

Hogg said he studied American history for the past four years. He said he now knows every time other generations have faced challenges surrounding peace and security, it has allowed for a whole generation to stand up to make sure the next one doesn't have to live through their pain.

Vice President of Internal Administration for ASMSU Carl Austin Miller Grondin talked to the

student body about the story of his sister who was locked on campus throughout the mass shooting. He recited a play-by-play of the night with timestamps, depicting how long everything took to calm down on Monday night.

Grondin said he hasn't slept since Monday, angry that he could not be there for his sister when he was supposed to be her protector. He said while he's tired and frustrated, he knows that the MSU community will get through it together.

"At the end of the day, the questions of how we're doing, the statements that are saying how



# SPARTAN

# STRONG

## FIELD

## HOUSE

### CRAFTS, DRAFTS & EATS

strong we are, and that we're all resilient is too much to bear," Grondin said. "I'm so sorry to all of us. I am so sorry to each and every one of you because we should not have to go through this because it was preventable. Our pain seems like a spectacle for the nation, and we have to do all of this under a microscope, but we will make it through on the other side and create change so that this never happens again."

Social relations and policy sophomore Rani Assava said she thought a mass shooting could never happen to her and now called herself a "statistic." She said her school will be known for this tragedy and students will be terrified to return for a long time.

"How are we supposed to go back to normal as though nothing happened?" Assava said. "Of course the world is soon going to forget. But I won't and neither will the 39,000 other students, or anyone else with any affiliation with MSU. We are expected to sleep in the same beds we hid under. We are expected to grieve with all those other families who've been victims of gun violence and you will soon forget us like you forgot them."

In between speeches, social science education sophomore Jacinta Henry performed a song on her ukulele with the lyrics, "We've been fighting since we could talk, been protesting since we could walk."

After speeches were over, the protest allowed for an open mic, letting attendees address the crowd. Interdisciplinary humanities senior Clay Griffith called on the university administration to recognize mental health.

"I think it's not only important to have our voice heard, but also act as a voice for those who can't be heard, who aren't able to be here because their lives have been taken or because they don't feel safe and protected enough to come out today," Griffith said. "It's hopefully not just my voice but the voice of those I stand with."

Lansing area resident Avelino Ortiz also stood in line to speak to the crowd. He said he didn't know how many more lives need to be lost to enact gun control laws.

"I think it's important that everybody is heard," Ortiz said. "Gun violence does not affect just MSU students, it affects everybody nationwide. This is me doing my part by helping and saying, 'What can I do to help the situation?'"

Environmental studies and sustainability junior McKenzie Kositzke went away from campus this week to put distance between her and school, helping her grieve from afar. She said that coming back on Monday was too soon.

"I came to be with Spartans who didn't think class was appropriate," Kositzke said. "Putting a timeline on someone's grief isn't appropriate at all. I think that being here for them, and for myself will just help everyone."

Many attendees left the Capitol, embracing one another in hugs of "I'll see you soon," signifying the spirit of the Spartans: Standing with one another in a time of grief.



A tear falls down the cheek of apparel and textiles senior Zoe Beers at a protest against gun violence at the Michigan State Capitol on Feb. 15, 2023. The Lansing community heard speeches from state representatives, ASMSU President Jo Kovach and many MSU students at the protest. Photo by Audrey Richardson



Michigan State students sit on the lawn of the Michigan State Capitol protesting gun violence on Feb. 15, 2023, two days after the mass shooting on MSU's campus. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez



David Hogg of March for Our Lives speaks at the Michigan State Capitol on Feb. 20, 2023 during a sit-down protest against gun violence held by Michigan State University students, one week after a mass shooting took place on campus. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez



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# HOME ISN'T AN OPTION

## International students stuck on campus following mass shooting

By Wajeeha Kamal  
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The process of going home for international students is often a difficult and expensive one, which means they make Michigan State University their home.

When many students packed up following the Feb. 13 mass shooting, leaving an eerie feeling on MSU's campus, international students had no choice but to stay put. Many felt unsafe, scared and alone without their families in a wave of uncertainty.

"Dorms are our home," supply chain management sophomore Devangi Deoras said. "That's where we live and there is no other place that we call home in this country."

Deoras, a resident assistant in McDonel Hall, sheltered in her room with a few of her friends, two of which were intercultural aides Manasvi Jain and Rainy Jain. All three are international students from India.

While Deoras sheltered, she had trouble getting in touch with her parents because of time zone differences.

"I think it's a fact that as an international student, you don't have family here to lean on," Deoras said. "(My parents) didn't even hear about the situation until it was almost over ... I felt very alone at that moment in terms of not having any family support."

Following the near weeklong cancellation of classes, Deoras and Manasvi were housed by MSU student and Virginia native Saahiti Kurella, while Rainy stayed in a discounted room at

a hotel in the Lansing area with other international students.

Deoras said she doesn't know if she'll be able to stay in her dorm room again.

"I went inside my room after the whole thing was over," Deoras said. "I got flashbacks of whatever had happened, and that space just doesn't feel the same ... I personally don't know what I'm going to feel like when I enter that space again."

Deoras, Manasvi and Rainy began searching for temporary rental homes after the shelter-in-place order was lifted.

"We connected on the fact that we don't have any family," Deoras said. "Our family will never probably understand what we went through because the concept of gun violence is so new to them."

Manasvi said she would rather have gone home and hug her parents.

"Because the feeling of hugging your parents after all of this has happened ... I saw some people doing that and I was like, 'I could not do that until I'm back home in May,'" Manasvi said.

Similarly, Rainy's family wants her back home, but she can't return to India unless a hybrid class option is offered by the university or all her professors.

Rainy, an economics student who frequently had classes in Berkey Hall, said she would typically leave the hall at 8 p.m. The mass shooting began at 8:18 p.m.

"As an international student, I felt like we needed a home and, for us, MSU was it," Rainy said. "These four hours totally changed our per-



Flowers sit outside the fence of the MSU Union on Feb. 20, 2023. The day before, 'Spartan Sunday' was held on campus where students and the community came together to take back the campus after a mass shooting took place on Feb. 13, 2023. Photo by Devin Anderson-Torrez

spective about MSU. Like, we don't see it as a home anymore."

Biochemistry and molecular biology freshman Laura Santos, who is from Brazil, was housed by her roommate, digital storytelling sophomore Faith Cabalum, after the shooting.

"When everything kind of went down, we didn't really know what to do," Cabalum said. "Obviously, it was a really confusing time ... For (Santos), it was kind of, like, she had no choice in terms of going home and in such a sudden manner."

Santos and Cabalum live in Wonders Hall and were in a Case Hall study lounge when the

shots were first fired.

"If it wasn't for (Cabalum), I would have probably just stayed there because I was never trained for that," Santos said.

Santos said although her mom was on the phone with her while she was sheltering in place, her mom didn't have access to information like the police scanner, and news in Brazil would often misinterpret what went on.

"Every time that I call my mom and my grandma they're super scared," Santos said. "I think it's worse for them. And that's the part that hurts the most, not being there and not being able to show that I'm okay."



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# 'With us forever': Hundreds line up for tattoos benefiting MSU mass shooting victims' families



Tattoo artist Alex Martinez tattoos the Spartan helmet onto customer and mental health care worker Chelsea Ghastin during an event honoring the victims from the MSU mass shooting at Ink Therapy on Feb. 19, 2023. Photo by Audrey Richardson

By Liz Nass  
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Five hours after the first tattoo was inked, the line outside of Ink Therapy Lansing was still trailing outside of the doors at 5:30 p.m.

Some groups waited more than two hours to get a Spartan helmet or green heart tattooed — art that supported the victims of the mass shooting on Michigan State University's campus on Monday, Feb. 13.

Owner Corey Warren brings out a megaphone and calls out names of those who are next to get inked. Yells of excitement from the crowd fill the studio.

Ink Therapy offered pre-selected tattoo options centered around MSU. Each tattoo was \$40 and half of the proceeds went to the victims' families to help cover their expenses.

Warren is a father with children in school. His first thought when he heard of the MSU shooting was about what it would be like to lose his child, he said. He then thought of the families of the victims and knew he had to put together an event to support them financially.

"I don't care if it's \$10, \$20, \$100 or \$1,000," Warren said. "It doesn't matter, let's do something. Let's be a part of this in some way to start to try to give back to the victims and the families and to the community in Michigan State. We wanted to do something, not that money is going to fix anything. We know that. But it's what we can do."

The turnout was more than they had expected. Around 500 people had lined up by the time the shop opened at noon and the line wrapped around the block. Warren said he wouldn't describe himself as excited, but humbled.

Warren said it's not about Ink Therapy or the tattoos. The event, he said, is for uniting the community and the meaning behind the phrase that has been shared since Feb. 13: Spartan Strong.

"An event like this, by nature, is going to bring people together," Warren said. "What we're doing right now is, we are almost branding ourselves proud to be a Spartan ... It's putting that label on you that you're going to have forever saying, 'I'm proud to be



"We grieve together.  
We heal together.  
We grow together."



STUDENT BOOK STORE

# TEDxMSU

## STANDS WITH SPARTANS



## WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

### #SPARTANSTRONG

**TEDxMSU**  
x = independently organized TED event

 International Students Association



a Spartan.”

Brittini Warren, Corey’s wife and shop manager of Ink Therapy, was the one who came up with the idea for the event. She was in the middle of getting a tattoo when she heard about the shooting and became extremely emotional, wanting to do anything to support those affected by it.

“The community felt the exact same, which is so amazing,” Brittini Warren said. “We didn’t expect this type of turnout at all. This is the biggest special that we’ve ever done easily. I mean, we are probably going to be here until sometime around morning maybe.”

Groups received tattoos until well after midnight, as the artists worked for 12 hours straight. She said the turnout “pulled on every single one of her heartstrings.”

As people came through the shop, waiting for their turn, the donation box for both the shop and the victims’ families filled up.

Veterinary medicine freshman Lysie Taylor got her first tattoo at the event: an outline of the state of Michigan with a green heart on East Lansing. Born in Alabama, she wanted a tattoo showing Michigan was still her home away from home, even after tragedy.

“(A tattoo) is something that you can use to say, ‘this is me’ without actually having to speak it,” Taylor said.

The turnout showed Taylor that she is part of a whole Spartan community that wants to come together. She saw not just the university affected, but individuals across Greater Lansing.

Special ed-learn disabilities junior Kaitlyn Jacques went to the shop from the Spartan Sunday event held to “brighten campus” ahead of students’ return Monday. She wanted to get a peace sign on her arm to

“An event like this, by nature, is going to bring people together. What we’re doing right now is, we are almost branding ourselves proud to be a Spartan ... It’s putting a label on you that you’re going to have forever saying ‘I’m proud to be a Spartan.’”

**Corey Warren**  
Ink Therapy Lansing owner

show solidarity while the community grieves. She said she wanted a tattoo anyway, but knowing that the proceeds would go to the families solidified her decision.

“For me, it’s going to be about overcoming something so painful, remembering what happened and not letting it just go,” Jacques said “It’s with us forever basically and that’s kind of like a tattoo. This isn’t something that is just gonna go away. I don’t think that anyone should ... forget about this.”

Rachel Jackson, a Sparrow Hospital employee, said she was still in shock from

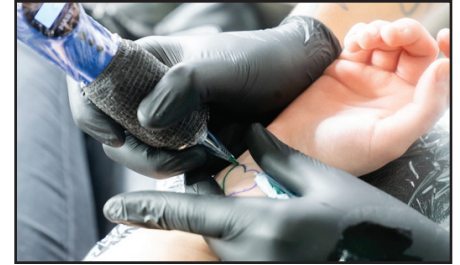


Veterinary medicine first-year Jennifer Bezerra laughs with her peers, veterinary medicine first-years Lysie Taylor and Maryann Khong, before getting a green-filled heart tattoo on the back of her left arm at Ink Therapy during an event honoring the victims of MSU’s mass shooting on Feb. 19, 2023. Photo by Audrey Richardson

the acts on Monday. She decided to take the day to spend with her coworker and get a “Spartan Strong” tattoo.

“It’s just something that’s always there,” Jackson said. “It’s a constant reminder and then it’s always there for everyone to see.”

With the color green getting inked across the shop, some laughed at the funny faces their friends made when being poked with the needle, while others thanked the artists for marking them with a permanent reminder of the strength of the Spartan community.



Veterinary medicine first-year Amanda Ebersberger gets a green heart tattooed on her right wrist during an event honoring the victims of MSU’s mass shooting at Ink Therapy on Feb. 19, 2023. Photo by Audrey Richardson

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