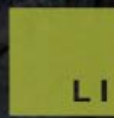


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JAMAICA PLAIN

Months after deadly shooting, JP pizzeria sees continued support

Posted by Matt Rocheleau March 8, 2011 03:26 PM

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(David L. Ryan/ Globe Staff)

A photo of Boston Police outside the Same Old Place pizzeria in the days following a deadly November shooting and stabbing incident there. Months later, locals say officials have lived up to their promise to step up area police patrols.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

More than three months after a deadly shooting, a popular Jamaica Plain restaurant continues to receive support from residents, city officials, and police.

“I don’t think people have forgotten,” said Michelle Ciampa, 22, speaking on the behalf of her grandfather Fred Ciampa, who owns the 33-year-old Same Old Place pizza parlor on Centre Street. “Since the shooting, things have gone back to normal. No one really likes to talk about it, but there has definitely

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been a lot more support since. People definitely came together after that happened.”

Three people were killed and a bystander injured in the gun-and-knife battle that authorities have linked to gang activity.

Store employees and others interviewed along the neighborhood’s busy commercial stretch recalled the late November incident as an anomaly, and said stepped-up police patrols since have made a typically quiet, nonviolent area safer.

“JP Center generally has few incidents that affect public safety,” said Boston Police spokeswoman Elaine Driscoll in an e-mail Tuesday describing the incident as “isolated.”

On Nov. 21, police said three “gang-affiliated” city residents, Winzisky Soto, 27, of Dorchester, Ariel Dume, 20, of East Boston and Johnnel Cruz, 20, of Jamaica Plain were killed – two from bullet wounds, another from being stabbed – during a fight that broke out at the restaurant and spilled onto Centre Street. The three killed were involved in the fight and known to authorities, police said. A woman walking outside the shop was struck in the leg by a bullet, treated and released from a hospital.

“That was a very rare incident,” said Michelle Ciampa sitting at a small table near the restaurant’s entryway Tuesday afternoon as a steady stream of lunchtime customers, many who knew and exchanged greetings with her grandfather, came through. “There has always been a good police presence here, especially since that happened, and it hasn’t dropped off” – a statement city police agreed with.

The store has stepped up its own policies to increase security measures. Workers declined to specify what has changed so as not to undermine those efforts. Employees said the incident was the first disturbance the eatery has seen in its three-plus decades of business.

The three employees working on the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving who witnessed the mêlée are all still working at the restaurant and were behind the counter Tuesday.

“I dreamt about it one time, and that’s it,” said one of those employees, a Boston resident who declined to give his name.

The brazen dinner-time shooting sent customers and employees ducking for cover and left behind broken glass and bullet holes.

“It was scary, but they’re still working here, and they all feel safe to do so,” Ciampa said of employees.

Those workers were offered counseling in the days following the deadly incident, but all declined and none have showed any signs or expressed they are feeling residual effects, store officials said.

The incident followed a [violent and deadly Boston summer](#). City and police officials quickly promised a renewed effort to confront area gang violence in the restaurant shooting’s wake.

“In the last several months, individuals known to be involved in this activity have been targeted by police and arrested,” Driscoll said, referring to “an ongoing city-wide strategy to address gang, gun and drug concerns.”

Citing safety reasons, she declined to provide specific deployment numbers,

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but said, District E-13 Captain John Greland “plans to continue increased officer patrols and visibility in the area.”

Asked whether Boston Police plan to up patrols along Centre Street or elsewhere in the city as the weather warms, she said the department “will continue to make deployment decisions based on crime analysis from our Intelligence Center and input from the community”

Standing a few storefronts away from Same Old Place at the corner of Centre Street and Seaverns Avenue, Anthony Toogood, 45, of Dorchester described how he has seen change in security in the area since the shootings. He said he’s seen more law enforcement officials, whether they are patrolling on foot or bike, working a nearby construction detail or simply passing through the area on a motorcycle or in their cruiser.

An employee at a Dunkin’ Donuts on the next block who has lived in the neighborhood for eight years, said she, too, has seen more police presence – some ticketing cars or watching for loiterers and panhandlers – and that it has made the area safer.

“People speak up a lot more now,” added Toogood, who has been regularly standing along the area’s bustling sidewalks since just before the Nov. 21 shootings, seeking sponsorships for a breast cancer walk he’s planning to partake in. “I’ve seen a step-up in people’s attitudes,” in terms of reporting illegal or suspicious activity.

Same Old Place employees said police officers and local politicians, many of whom were regulars there prior to the shooting, frequently stop in to both order food, and to ask how the business and its workers are doing.

Police said they continue to have “a close working relationship with the JP community ... The community works very closely with police to maintain a peaceful environment.”

“Residents input and involvement is critical to neighborhood safety,” police spokeswoman Driscoll added.

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