

11-year-old critical after drive-by shooting

SHOOTING from B1
back," Carlos said.

She said her brother-in-law ran into the house when the shooting started.

"It just seemed wrong for him to run in here," she said. "They were shooting like crazy."

Nadya woke up yesterday morning asking for water and juice, Carlos said, but family members are still not sure that she will fully recover.

The shooting unnerved neighbors and business owners. One of the bullets shattered a window at the grocery store. Efrain Vega, who owns the building, said he will ask the telephone company to remove a pay phone outside the store because it draws loiterers.

"They won't move. They say they want to use the phone," he said. "We have to stop that."

Young neighborhood girls were saddened when they learned that the noises they originally thought were firecrackers had actually been bullets, one of which wounded their friend. One by one, they found out.

"I started crying," said Jasmin Cartagena, 9.

Her sister, Crystal Cartagena, 12,

ran to her grandmother's house in fear after she saw Nadya wounded on the sidewalk. She said she is afraid to come outside now.

A 53-year-old neighbor of Nadya's, who declined to give her name, said she has been afraid to let her grandsons outside — except in her own backyard.

"There are all these young people running around, selling drugs, and white people come from Jersey to buy drugs," she said. "I'm afraid they're going to shoot me, too."

The woman, a 25-year resident of the neighborhood, said that the drug activity has gotten worse and that police don't seem to be around as much as they were earlier this year.

Chief Inspector Raymond Rooney, however, said that the police presence in the neighborhood is as strong as it was when it was designated as part of Operation Sunrise in mid-April.

"As we speak, there are plain clothes and uniform police officers in Zone 3 making arrests," Rooney said. "Police presence doesn't always deter them because sometimes they shoot at the police."

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