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Second arrest in church shooting

Police say boy, 16, took part in Feb. 14 shooting that injured two in Richmond; first teen apprehended is released

By Karl Fischer

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A second teenager went to Juvenile Hall over the weekend in connection with a shooting inside a Richmond church, but the first went free without charges, police said Monday.

Officers arrested the new suspect, a 16-year-old, on Barrett Avenue about 8 p.m. Saturday, Detective Sgt. Bisa French said. Detectives issued a warrant for him on suspicion of conspiracy last week.

Police said that he and a 15-year-

old arrested Thursday both participated in a Feb. 14 attack inside New Gethsemane Church of God in Christ that wounded brothers, 14 and 19, who were attending a service.

Three men wearing hoods entered the church at the corner of 21st Street and Roosevelt Avenue shortly after noon and paced the aisles in front of about 200 worshippers as if looking for someone. One of the attackers shot into a pew, wounding the brothers, whom police say likely were not the targets of the attack. New Gethsemane finished its service after the shooting, and both victims have since returned home from the hospital.

Police identified neither suspect because of age and have released few details about motive or theory to the case.

The first suspect, a 15-year-old,

was released from Juvenile Hall on Friday. He was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy. Detectives continue to search for more suspects.

The attack prompted an animate response from Richmond's faith community, which gathered a large crowd at New Gethsemane on Saturday to begin planning a massive door-knocking campaign in city flatland neighborhoods.

"There was a great turnout," said the Rev. Andre Shumake, one of the organizers. "Spirits were high, and people left feeling encouraged and hopeful."

Local ministers say the attack shows that Richmond youth do not hold churches in the same regard as past generations, in large part because the faith community has not adequately addressed their needs or realities growing up in tough neighborhoods.

Leaders plan to send hundreds of people into central and southside neighborhoods to knock on doors and reconnect with families and the young.

The group plans to start Saturday, Shumake said. They ask men in the community to come to New Gethsemane at 9 a.m. for a breakfast and a door-knocking kickoff. They hope to gather at least 500 people for the effort.

The same day police arrested the 16-year-old, the national peacekeeping group known as The Guardian Angels met at El Cerrito del Norte BART for a launch party and recruitment walk for its new Richmond chapter.

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