

# Dover-Foxcroft teen credited with rescuing boy before drowning in the Sebec River



Alex Barber | BDN

A certificate of achievement for Dacano Arno is stapled to a memorial banner at Foxcroft Academy in Dover-Foxcroft on June 4, 2013.

By **Alex Barber**, BDN Staff • June 4, 2013 8:20 pm

Updated: June 4, 2013 8:22 pm

SEBEC, Maine — A Dover-Foxcroft teen rescued another boy before being pulled under by the violent current of the Sebec River and drowning Monday evening.

Dacano Arno, a 17-year-old junior at Foxcroft Academy, was swimming with his

twin brother, Darango Arno, and friends near the dam on the river. The six boys had been jumping off the Sebec Village Bridge about 50 feet upstream of the dam where the water was relatively calm, according to Dover-Foxcroft Fire Chief Gerald Guyotte.

Dacano Arno and another boy ventured toward the fenced-off hydroelectric turbines, slightly south of the dam, where the water flowed much more rapidly, according to Guyotte.

The current was too much for Dacano Arno and the other teen as they struggled to keep their heads above water.

“The currents were so huge they were pulling them under and popping them up,” Jody Arno, Dacano’s mother, said Tuesday.

Dacano pushed the other teen to a rock, where he climbed to safety, according to both Guyotte and Jody Arno. Seeing his brother in trouble and reaching for him in the current, Darango Arno briefly grabbed hold of Dacano’s hand. But Dacano slipped away.

“He started to go down and coming up they think he hit his head,” said Jody Arno, fighting back tears.

He didn’t resurface.

At approximately 7 p.m., Dacano Arno’s friends flagged down a vehicle for help and also went to Maine Game Warden Dan Carroll’s residence, which is near where the boys had been swimming, according to a press release issued by the Maine Warden Service. Several police and fire agencies went to the scene.

Dacano Arno’s body was discovered at approximately 8 p.m. near the base of the dam. He was pronounced dead at the scene by an ambulance attendant, according to the press release.

Guyotte said Dacano saved the other teen’s life.

“If it had not been for his actions to help the other boy, he would’ve been gone too,” said Guyotte. “He was always there to help the other kids. Always. No matter what it was.”

Dacano Arno was a strong swimmer, but it didn’t matter in the swift current.

“I don’t think anybody could have survived where he went,” said Guyotte, adding that several boulders are on the bottom of the river.

The area was posted as off limits, he said.

“All of us are in shock over this,” said Angela Bonacasa, executive director of the Center Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft, where Dacano Arno used to volunteer. “To lose somebody so young and so full of promise is heartbreaking.”

“It’s such a shock to this neighborhood and community. I didn’t want to hear that this morning,” said Tom Lyford, a former teacher and clerk at the Thompson Free Library in Dover-Foxcroft.

Lyford said he watched the Arno twins grow up as they visited the library over the years.

Foxcroft Academy Head of School Arnold Shorey said Tuesday that Dacano Arno was well known at the high school.

“He was a very nice young man and well liked by everybody — faculty, students; freshmen and seniors. He was that popular,” said Shorey.

A long sheet of paper where students can sign messages to Dacano was stationed in a hallway in the school along with a sculpture made by the teen.

Grief counseling is being provided to the school by **Mayo Regional Hospital** in Dover-Foxcroft and therapy dogs are also at Foxcroft Academy, said Shorey.

“We will continue to provide that support until we don’t need it anymore,” said Shorey.

Dacano Arno volunteered all around town.

“He would volunteer to do things around the school and would volunteer at the snack shack during some athletic events,” said Shorey.

At the Center Theatre, Dacano helped run movies and ran the concession area as a volunteer, said Bonacasa.

“Some people told me they enjoyed seeing his smiling face when they came into the theater,” she said.

Other volunteers enjoyed his company as well, said Bonacasa.

“They thought he was a lot of fun. When we had high school kids and young students into the theater, it tickled them to see someone their own age doing all the grownup stuff,” she said.

It seemed everyone had a story about Dacano Arno.

“He and his brother used to sneak out in the night when it was snowing and go out shoveling their neighbor’s dooryard,” said Shorey.

Lyford, who is a neighbor of the Arnos, also remembered the story.

“One winter, I had the horrible job of shoveling snow, but there was already a path shoveled,” said Lyford. “[Dacano and Darango] were over to my neighbor’s house. I said, ‘How come you’re doing that?’ They said, ‘We’ve got nothing to do. We’re bored.’”

Jody Arno said Dacano often helped out their elderly neighbors.

“He was such a good kid,” she said.

Lyford described Dacano as funny, bright, quick, humorous and mischievous.

“He always had his friends. That was part of the problem,” Lyford remembered. “He’d go with his friends out of sight [at the library when he was younger] and then I’d find a spitball up on the ceiling. He’d say, ‘We didn’t do that. It was the old people who did it.’”

He and his brother were also quick to lend a hand, he said.

“My neighbor had this great big RV. It was huge. One day, the air conditioning wasn’t working. There was this tiny place you could crawl. I wasn’t quite small

enough to get in there, so I said maybe one of those guys would,” Lyford said. “They came right over and crawled in with flashlights and everything and took care of it.”

Dacano Arno’s death occurred a little more than a week before the last day of school at Foxcroft Academy.

Assisting in the search for Arno were Sebec, Dover-Foxcroft and Milo firefighters, the Piscataquis County Sheriff’s Office and the Brownville Police Department, the press release stated.

The incident remains under investigation.

*BDN writer Ryan McLaughlin contributed to this report.*

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