

Hit-run victim's kin seek witnesses

Associated Press

HARTFORD — Seven months after a hit-and-run driver struck Angel Arce Torres on Park Street in Hartford, the 78-year-old great-grandfather remains paralyzed from the neck down and needs a respirator to breathe.

Police have not yet arrested anyone in connection with the crime, which attracted national attention when it was captured on videotape and showed pedestrians and drivers doing nothing to help.

Torres now stays at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain, where his family is helping him with everyday life and holding out hope that police will find the driver who changed all their lives.

"It's a good city," Torres' son, Angel Arce, told the Hartford Courant in Friday's edition, referring to Hartford. "But somebody out there knows something, and I am begging them to come forward. ... Deep in my heart of hearts, I know there are people who want to help."

Torres, a retired forklift operator, was struck on the afternoon

of May 30.

In the video, he begins to cross Park Street, a two-way street just blocks from the state Capitol, after buying milk at a grocery. A tan Toyota and a dark Honda that is apparently chasing it veer across the center line, and Torres is hit by the Honda. Both cars then dart down a side street.

Hartford police have said they received four cell phone calls within a minute of the incident. Initially, Police Chief Daryl Roberts said Torres was ignored by passing motorists and pedestrians and said the city had lost its moral compass.

Nancy Mulroy, a police spokeswoman, said Roberts met with Arce recently to update him about the case.

"The investigation is still very active and ongoing and we are still asking for the public's assistance to help us in solving this crime," she said. In the wake of the incident, grant money was made available for Crime Stoppers, a community, reward-based organization that fields

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anonymous tips. **help."**

"We're hoping that somebody might utilize Crime Stoppers," she said.

Angel Arce

Arce said while the police have not given up solving the case, he feels like local politicians have forgotten his father.

Yet Torres' family has not forgotten him. Arce has spent many of his father's waking hours since the incident at the man's side, feeding him broth, melted ice cream and coffee through a straw. While Torres can speak, he cannot make sound, so his son has learned to read his lips.

"We're not going to abandon our father," Arce said. "We want to be part of his everyday life, just like before. He took care of us, now we're going to take care of him."

The family also still hears from strangers. Each Friday, an elderly couple from Washington state who read about the hit-and-run in the news, sends Torres a card with a cheerful message or a stuffed animal. Once, they sent a Bible.

Since May, Torres has welcomed two more great-grandchildren and he and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. His children arranged to have their parents renew their vows at the hospital.

"She was so full of joy," Arce said his mother. "She's been so strong throughout this ... She tries to hide her emotional pain, but when she's alone, she cries."

