

SCHOOL SHOOTING: PRINCIPAL FACES LONG RECOVERY

Facciolo upbeat after jaw surgery

By **RALPH MONTANO**
Sun Staff Writer

LOMA LINDA — Sacred Heart Principal Richard Facciolo is not expected to resume his duties this school year as he recovers from a shotgun wound he suffered last week, hospital officials said Friday.

However, the 43-year-old was in high spirits as he continued the slow process of recovering from a lower jaw replacement at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

"He's a tough guy," said Dr. Doug Hendricks, the micro surgeon who performed the reconstruction. "His family has been great. They are very supportive."

Hendricks said surgical technology that did not exist 15 years ago was used last week in repairing the damage done by a 12-gauge shotgun fired from about three feet away.

A student, John Sirola Jr., 13, shot Facciolo on Jan. 23 as he sat at his desk in the principal's office, police said. The boy then ran from the office and was killed when the gun discharged, striking him in the chest.

San Bernardino County Coroner investigators still are trying to determine whether the fatal shot was a suicide or an accident.

"He's a tough guy. His family has been great. They are very supportive."

Dr. Doug Hendricks, after performing reconstructive surgery on Richard Facciolo's jaw and neck

The boy had a history of discipline problems at both public and private schools. He was sent to Facciolo's office for a dress-code violation and was told by Facciolo to improve his attitude about 90 minutes before the shooting, police said.

The shotgun blast struck Facciolo in the left side of his neck, lower face and left shoulder.

To replace Facciolo's shattered jaw and a large portion of his neck destroyed by the blast, surgeons took bone and tissue from one of his legs, Hendricks said. The Jan. 26 procedure took 14 hours.

The fibula, the smaller of two bones in the lower leg, was used as a jaw replacement, Hendricks said. The bone was removed, along with blood vessels

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REBUILDING A FACE

To replace the shattered jaw of Principal Richard Facciolo, wounded in a Jan. 23 shooting at Sacred Heart School in Redlands, surgeons at Loma Linda University Medical Center used bone, blood vessels and skin from his leg. The procedure was not possible 15 years ago. The reconstruction took 14 hours and more surgery will be needed.



Richard Facciolo



1 To replace the shattered jaw, the fibula was removed with its blood vessels intact. The vessels are needed to supply blood flow to the fibula in its new site.

2 Small wedges are cut out of the fibula so the bone can be shaped to follow the original jaw line. The fibula's blood vessels are reconnected at the neck.



3 Skin from the incision at the back of leg was transplanted to replace destroyed jaw tissue.



Area that took the brunt of the shotgun blast.

Source: Dr. Doug Hendricks, micro surgeon

PAUL RODRIGUEZ/The Sun

Shooting prompts Catholic school policy review

By **STEVEN CHURCH**
The Sun's Redlands Bureau

Catholic school officials will huddle later this month to talk about last week's shooting at Sacred Heart School in Redlands, in which the principal was wounded in the face by a student who died minutes later of a shotgun blast.

The goal of the review is simple, said the Rev. Howard Lincoln, spokesman for the Catholic Diocese of San Bernardino.

"To do everything that we can to make sure it never ever happens again," Lincoln said.

John Sirola Jr., 13, died Jan. 23 after he was shot in the chest at the school. Police aren't sure whether the boy intended to commit suicide or tripped while running on wet concrete with the sawed-off shotgun in his hands.

Moments before, the boy shot Sacred Heart Principal Richard Facciolo in the face from less than three feet away.

The teenager had stolen the shotgun from a family friend a few weeks earlier and sawed off the barrel.

Facciolo is in fair condition at Loma Linda University Medical Center, where he has undergone two rounds of reconstructive surgery, Lincoln said.

The principals of all 30 diocese schools will meet with Thomas Hedding, superintendent of the church's San Bernardino County schools, Lincoln said.

Lincoln declined to say exactly what policies the officials will review.

"It's going to be an overall review of the incident and what implications it has toward our schools," he said.

Parents said Friday that the school is trying to return to normal after more than a week of high emotions.

"Tuesday was the teacher appreciation luncheon," said Patty Holohan. "Anything that was on the calendar before (the

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