



photo by Gabrielle Dore

NEVER FORGOTTEN After tying bows to her desk, students in English teacher Mr. Kevin Clyne's third period class chose to leave Colleen's seat vacant in remembrance of her. "We will keep the desk open as long as we need to," Mr. Clyne said. "We keep it open in her memory." Once decorated, the desk remained untouched by all his other classes as a sign of respect of the healing of the affected students.



photo by Natalia Bilek

ALWAYS REMEMBERED Colleen's classmates decorate her desk in remembrance of her. Sierra Falcon, junior, along with others, tied purple ribbons to Colleen's desk to memorialize her.



photo by Natalia Bilek

HEALING WITH TIME Over fall break, after the death of Colleen, community members tied purple ribbons on trees around town. Meredith Simmons, junior, and her fellow students and alumni memorialized Colleen by writing her name on the sidewalk outside the main doors of the school.

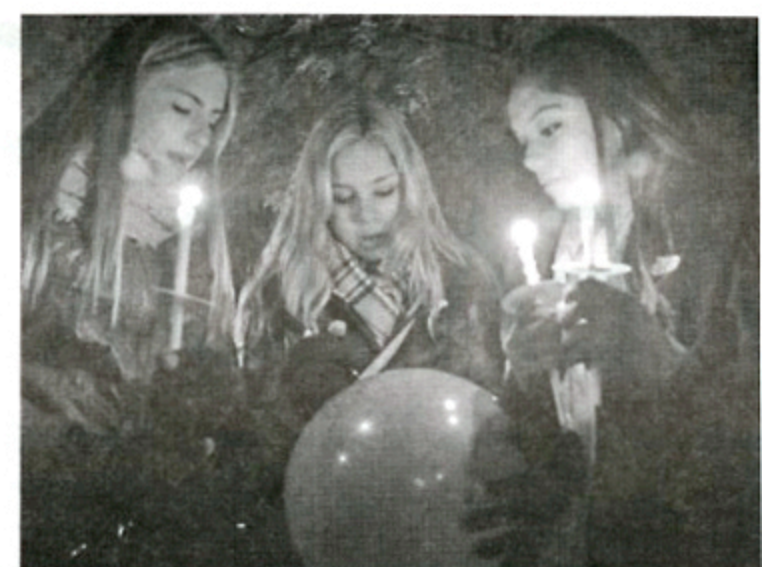


photo by Gabrielle Dore

SIDE BY SIDE The community gathered at 7 p.m. Oct. 24 at St. Thomas More for a vigil held in Colleen Lusk's Honor. Carly Peilet, sophomore, and Juniors Priscilla Rivera and Mary Bridget Baeza, in addition to other students, faculty and friends wrote messages on balloons and released them into the night sky.

Mourning glory

After the untimely passing of Colleen Lusk, junior, Oct. 24, students, alumni, faculty, community join together to support the Cystic Fibrosis cause

Cassie Eberle
Editor-in-chief

Although two weeks have passed since the untimely death of Colleen Lusk, junior, the school and community continue to show support for Colleen, her family and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Greater Illinois.

"I think it is remarkable that she was one single person and she brought together not only the school, but this whole community. She showed them to really just embrace each other and learn to accept one another for the hardships that everyone has to face," Kathleen Gonzales, junior, said. "I think that she really brought to light the challenges that other people have to overcome. It just really got everyone's attention about how we should respect what everyone has to go through."

Colleen was one of 30,000 Americans affected by

this disease. Cystic Fibrosis, commonly referred to as CF, attacks the lungs and digestive system of the patient. A defective gene causes the lungs to produce mucus that clogs the lungs, resulting in life-threatening lung infections, according to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Colleen, who was diagnosed at birth, belonged to the 70 percent of patients diagnosed by the age of two. Although 45 percent of the CF community is over the age of 18, Colleen lost her battle Oct. 24 at the age of 16.

Colleen participated in many extracurricular activities including the Munster Theatre Company and Speech and Debate. In addition, Colleen was a member of the French Club and Best Buddies.

"When you get a positive, influential person, you see a great output of support," Mrs. Tammy Daugherty, English teacher, said. "Munster has lost one of their daughters. She was really known amongst the community and school."

Prior to the death of Colleen, students united to show their support by posting paper hearts on the wall with encouraging messages for her and her family. In addition, on Oct. 22, students across the area wore purple in support of Colleen.

"Not only did Munster High School ignore their differences and come together to honor their great loss," Katie Gajewski, '13, said. "but alumni from years past wore purple too. Whether or not we, meaning the college kids from Munster, all knew Colleen, we realized what an impact she had on our peers and friends, and represented her anyway."

Following her passing, students, teachers and members of the community gathered Oct. 24 in front of St. Thomas More for a vigil in honor of Colleen.

"It honestly just made everyone feel better to just be with people and to just cry on each other's shoulders," Kathleen said. "Because we knew that even though she wasn't with us, we still had each other and we all had her in our hearts and I think that was

just beautiful."

To help her students heal, Mrs. Daugherty gave her them the opportunity to write down a memory on purple lined paper for Colleen's parents. In addition, Mrs. Daugherty also offered a second opportunity to her students. She started a collection for a memorial contribution to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Greater Illinois.

"I didn't have her as a student," Mrs. Daugherty said. "But I knew a lot of my students were close to her. I couldn't help Colleen, but I could help her friends. I wanted to give them outlets to help memorialize their friend."

Multiple other school organizations will contribute to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Greater Illinois, including DECA, who plan to donate the proceeds from the informal dance Nov. 15.

"Colleen had such a huge impact on the school and community that her memory deserved to be honored

and this seemed like a great way to do so," Vice President Emily Bochnowski, senior, said.

However, the support for Colleen and Cystic Fibrosis does not stop at the edge of town. Alumni students away at college continue to show their support through their efforts to form a team for the Cystic Fibrosis Great Stride walk May 18 in Chicago.

"I haven't actually gotten to do the walk in years," Katie said. "I want to make it a priority this summer because she (Colleen) was such a great hum being and this walk meant so much to her. I think that MHS students and alumni could band together in support of Colleen and raise awareness for Cystic Fibrosis while raising a lot of money for the cause to help kids that are in Colleen's situation."

Mrs. Suzanne Lusk, Colleen's mother, recognized the abundance of support for her daughter.

"We were extremely overwhelmed by the entire student body and community," Mrs. Lusk said. "The outpouring and love for Colleen is just tremendous and beautiful."

Mrs. Lusk would like Colleen to be remembered as a "sweet, outgoing and loving girl, who would do anything for anybody."

Although she is no longer here, Kathleen will always remember Colleen.

"I don't think I am ever really going to get over her death because I know that she is always going to be very, very special part of my heart that is gone now," Kathleen said. "Honestly, the best way to move forward is to just get back into the rhythm of things and just always keep her in your heart. Embrace life every single day the way she always did and just always keep her memory alive. She wouldn't want us to stop what we were doing and grieve for the rest of our lives. She wants us out there and she wants us living. She wants us to embrace each day as a new one. I think the best way to move on is to just honor the way she lived and embrace each day as a new one and live the way that she did."