

# Courtney like a 'magnet' in class

MIKE ADLER  
Staff Reporter

Courtney Trempe, who spent her last day greeting fellow students, was like a magnet in her Grade 2 classroom, her teacher said yesterday.

"She was attracting everybody. Always positive, always smiling," Nathalie Robert recalled at Dickson Hill Public School.

"She liked to read, she liked to write. She was artistic too."

On Wednesday, the friendly Stouffville girl who loved animals stood by her classroom door in the small French immersion school and welcomed visitors to a display on dinosaurs (or "animaux préhistoriques").

Later that afternoon, she was dead, the victim of a sudden dog attack.

On Thursday, children who knew the eight-year-old used a stuffed toy lion they called Simba to say things and ask questions they couldn't say to anyone else.

With members of a response team sent by the district public school board, her classmates sat in a "Circle of Life" on the floor, learned what happened and expressed grief at losing a girl Robert called the "sunshine of our classroom."

On the blackboard, they repeated her name in chalk and drew her face and her hair. "Courtney you are my best friend," one child wrote.

Courtney was "a very special child, as far as being active and helpful," said Glenn Campbell, principal of the school with 225 pupils from Stouffville and Unionville.

On Thursday, the stuffed lion was put at the front of the classroom. "Gradually the students went up and started to put materials (related to Courtney) around Simba," recalled Elizabeth Sampson, a behavioural specialist who was there. "They made this little corner for her," she said of the collection of art, notebooks and other favourite items.

■ Please see page 16 ■



DOG ON DEATH ROW: Mosley, a 120-pound bullmastiff who fatally wounded eight-year-old Courtney Trempe is being quarantined by animal control in Georgina and will be put to sleep by lethal injection in 10 days. The owners have agreed to his fate.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

# Bullmastiffs known for 'strong jaws'

LORRAINE O'GRADY  
Correspondent

Bullmastiffs, and any other breed of working dog, are not meant to be pets and should never be handled by amateurs or children, says one of the world's leading experts on application of working dogs.

Jerry Cudahy's comments come after a 130-pound bullmastiff grabbed hold of 8-year-old Courtney Trempe's throat Wednesday, killing the young girl.

"This is an enormous tragedy," Stouffville's Cudahy said. "People generally don't realize the potential an animal has."

"Bullmastiffs are generally very 'laid back' and gentle dogs, who don't present themselves as aggressive animals," he added, but all animals have natural instincts that can lead to an attack.

"There was no way the family could've known what might set the dog off," Cudahy said. "These are dogs we're talking about. They're not human beings, they can't be rationalized with."

The bullmastiff was originally used as a guard dog to ward off poachers. The game warden would set the dogs loose in the middle of the night to search for poachers.

"They were ideal because they were so quiet, they'd just sneak up on the poachers and bite them in the (rear end)," Cudahy

No police force would ever use a bullmastiff as a police dog, Cudahy said. The main purpose of a police dog is for tracking and, on occasion, protection.

"Mastiffs are too unpredictable."

Cudahy added that all dogs have the potential to bite, not just bullmastiffs.

"Even a little chihuahua has the capability to bite, the only difference is that the bullmastiff has the strength to kill and maybe a chihuahua would leave the victim needing a few stitches," Cudahy said. "God, I wish that little girl just

**"These are dogs we're talking about. They're not human beings, they can't be rationalized with."**

~dog expert Jerry Cudahy

needed a few stitches."

The breed was also used in South Africa to guard the diamond mines against miners sneaking back in at night to steal diamonds.

"But those dogs were trained to kill."

needed a few stitches."

**For more please turn to the Opinion page 4 and page 16.**

## DEALING WITH LOSS

From left, teacher Nathalie Robert, Elizabeth Sampson and Cameron Sauder, both of the board's tragic response team, talk to staff reporter Mike Adler about helping students cope with the loss of their classmate.



# No one will ever forget local tragedy: residents

■ From page 1 ■

don said. "These situations are rare, but they do occur," he said. "You have to be very careful with any dog around young children, but especially large, guard-type dogs."

Resident Sheila McLeod said she could empathize strongly with everyone involved.

"As a one-time dog owner and someone who has grandchildren, I am always very nervous when dogs, especially large ones, are around. I feel particularly sorry about the tragedy here, because it was no one's fault - it wasn't an irresponsible dog owner and I can't think of anyone who wouldn't be extremely upset over what happened."

"I don't know what to say. It's so sad for the parents of the little girl and for

the dog owners," said Les Broadbent. "I can't imagine having to deal with either side of it."

"The hardship that these people are going through is so multi-faceted," observed Frank May. "It's so tragic for the family that lost their daughter, how could you ever replace a child? And for the dog owners, they have to deal with the fact their dog killed a little girl, but it was still their family dog and they've had it for five years, so you've got really mixed emotions there as well."

"I am very saddened by this," said Charlene Jones.

"It's a tragedy, beyond speaking for everyone involved, and no one assumes that anyone will forget this or get over it, because the lives that have been affected are altered forever."

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