

Life stories

A celebration of lives well lived and people well loved
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MacCarl Marek cared for children in Aurora for decades

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Next time you drive by Taylor Park in Aurora, you should stop and take some time to remember Jane MacCarl Marek. The 52-year-old Aurora resident died without warning from sudden cardiac arrest in February.

The park is where MacCarl Marek took dozens of children from her home care over the years to play. She provided care to children in Aurora for close to 20 years.

One of those former home care children was Katy Lemaire. The 18-year-old Aurora resident lived next door to Jane and was the same age as her son, Lucas. "She basically was like a second mom," Lemaire said.

Even as she got older, Lemaire would continue to go over to spend time with Jane.

"She was a really genuine person. She was always there to listen. You genuinely wanted to be around her," Lemaire said.

While MacCarl Marek loved kids, her mother Mary Tripp MacCarl said she was approachable for everyone. "She was real people person. She kept in touch with everyone," she said.

Like many others, Lemaire was shocked to learn of Jane's death in February. Because it happened so suddenly, she felt something needed to be done to help the community grieve.

Lemaire thought it would be nice to plant a tree in memory of Jane at the local park where she spent so much time. So she started a Facebook group and added Jane's Facebook friends and was able to raise \$1,400 for the cause.

That ended up being more than enough

money for a tree, which Lemaire organized through the Town of Aurora. They were also able to get a bench refurbished in memory of Jane.

On May 20, a ceremony was held at Taylor Park with dozens of community members to unveil the maple tree and bench in Jane's memory.

It was a touching moment for Tripp MacCarl, who said many of the children her daughter took care of over the years were there.

"It was wonderful to see the kind of commitment to the community Jane had and the commitment the community had for her," Tripp MacCarl said.

It was no surprise to Tripp MacCarl that her daughter ended up working with little children. Growing up in Toronto, MacCarl Marek would spend her summers babysitting kids.

Before moving to Aurora more than 20 years ago, MacCarl Marek lived in Toronto and was a veterinary technician. Those skills weren't lost in Aurora as she shared her love of animals with the community, too, Lemaire said.

Through organizing the tree dedication, Lemaire said her warm perceptions of Jane were confirmed by meeting all the people she had touched in various ways. "She just took everybody under her wing," she said.

The children will still be playing at Taylor Park this summer and while MacCarl Marek might not be there to watch, her spirit is on hand.

A tree in her name gives them clean air to breathe and a bench in her name gives the children a quiet place to rest or, better yet, their caregivers.



Jane MacCarl Marek

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Celebrate
a life
well lived!

"Adored by children, universally respected and an inspiration to her peers, Mrs. McCluskey was a tireless volunteer, quick to deflect the praise heaped on her."

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