

A Tribute to Ashling Murphy

The evening of Wednesday 12th January 2022 was one that our whole school community will, unfortunately, never forget as news emerged of the tragic death of our dear past-pupil, friend and neighbour, Ashling Murphy. We are all profoundly saddened by her senseless death, the loss of the huge potential of her life so tragically cut short, and every thought and prayer of ours is with her heartbroken family: Ray, Kathleen, Cathal and Amy, and with the extended Leonard and Murphy families. We extend our deepest sympathies also to Ashling's Aunt Sharon and Uncle Aidan and their six children who are presently part of our small school community and feel her loss so keenly.

Ashling was a beautiful, vibrant, talented, warm and friendly person. She was well known and much loved by so many in our school community and will be sadly missed. Ashling attended Coolanarney NS from 2003 to 2011 and was taught by Lorraine Mahon, Leonie Gath and Frances Lynch. We have so many fond memories of her time in school, of Ashling "the chatterbox" in class, of Ashling as Goldilocks in our school play, of Ashling fearless and determined on the school football team and at indoor hurling blitzes, of Ashling with the quick wit and endearing smile and the enduring sense of her absolute joy in life.

Ashling was a hard-working, diligent student who always gave her best. She was ambitious, musical, creative, dramatic and talented in so many ways. Her energy, vitality, good humour, kindness and empathy for others was always evident and she had very positive relationships with both her peers and teachers. Our thoughts and prayers are with her many school friends, especially the class of 2011, who are devastated at this time.

Many children currently in our school were privileged to be tutored by Ashling in music, or to have become familiar with her kindness as they were cared for after school by Ashling's mother, Kathleen. These children spoke of her gentle encouragement, her good humour and her sense of fun. Children spoke of her encouraging them to play camogie, to play the tin whistle and other instruments, to "get off that device and let's go out to play". She was generous with her time and helped the children in "Kathleen's" to do their homework when she was home. She played with them and they remember her as a fun, happy person with lots of jokes and time to talk. Ashling was also a babysitter to some in her younger years and those children remember her as being so kind to them; she was fun and sometimes let them stay up a little longer than they were meant to! All of these children are heartbroken at this time at the sudden and incomprehensible loss of their dear friend and tutor but will remember her fondly through these enduring links and memories.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Ashling's family at this time of indescribable sorrow. Ray and Kathleen have been supportive members of our school community for many years. Ray, like Ashling, has always been generous of his time in supporting school events, including providing a sound system for our school shows for many years. Kathleen is well known as childminder for many children in the school and her kindness and generosity to the children

is renowned. Those less fortunate to attend have often been heard to say “Why can’t I go to Kathleen’s too?” Ashling’s brother and sister, Cathal and Amy, also attended Coolanarney NS and their loss is surely beyond words. Ray and Kathleen worked hard and put great effort into raising three wonderful children. They taught their children to be polite, mannerly and caring towards others. They took the time and energy to bring their children to music lessons, competitions, sports training and games and put great emphasis on the importance of education. They inspired their children to excel and to be ambitious. They are wonderful role models for their children and raised Ashling to become the inspirational young lady we now grieve.

The outpouring of grief in our school community at the death of Ashling is reflective of the wonderful, vibrant, talented, enthusiastic, generous, kind person she was to all those who were fortunate enough to know her and to be inspired by her. It is reflective of the positive impact she had on so many in her short, but inspirational life. She brought joy and happiness to all who knew her and we are so privileged to have had Ashling as one of our own.

Codladh sámh, a stóirín.