

Waterloo Chronicle

Finch leaves a lasting legacy with co-workers

excerpts from (July 13, 2005)

By Caitlin Carpenter
For the Chronicle

When a tragedy strikes many grieve, though some also choose to see hope.

On the second anniversary of the tragic death of paramedic Amanda Finch, employees from the Glasgow Heights Pharma Plus and the Finch family held the second annual Paramedic Appreciation Day last Thursday.

Finch's co-workers, family, and those whom her life touched will never forget her, and neither will the many people who are benefited by such events held in her memory.

Amanda Finch was a 21-year-old Waterloo paramedic when she passed away while recovering from tonsil surgery on July 7, 2003.

She was a graduate of the paramedic program at Conestoga College and had worked at the Glasgow Heights Pharma Plus during her time at the college and during high school.

After Finch's death, her Pharma Plus co-worker Lale Renksizbulut came up with the idea of holding a Paramedic Appreciation Day in her memory.

Renksizbulut says, "Amanda was an extraordinary person."

Her manager Ellen Hackett, who organized the day, agrees, "Amanda had a radiant smile, always happy. She had a passion for everything; she had great people skills and loved to help people... We wanted to do something to honour and remember her and the line of work she loved so much." The first appreciation day was held last year, with ambulances of paramedics turning up. "People kept coming up to us, asking if there was an emergency or if someone got hurt," Hackett jokes. The success of this event encouraged Finch's co-workers to have a similar event last week.

At the appreciation day, paramedics are given a store discount and visitors can buy carnations. Money raised from the carnation sales goes to the Amanda Finch Memorial Bursary Fund, Last year, Pharma Plus was sold out of carnations by 3 p.m. and the event raised \$1,000 for the busary.

Hackett, who happily volunteered at the appreciation day during her vacation time, says, "Paramedics do the community a huge service. Anyone who's ever had any medical problem will certainly appreciate what they do." Since Finch passed away, other events have been held in memory of her life and her love for being a paramedic.



Heather Roussel examines the carnations as Ellen Hackett looks on during Paramedic Appreciation Day. CAITLIN CARPENTER PHOTO

Last year the Region of Waterloo's emergency medical services department organized the Amanda Bears program where children receiving emergency medical attention in the region were given a teddy bear for comfort. As well, the Ontario Paramedic Association presents the Amanda Finch Memorial Award annually.

Even with Finch's legacy and popularity, her mother, Lynn Finch, still finds the events taking place in her daughter's memory "to be quite amazing.. I am proud to live in Waterloo and be part of such a caring community."