



## Tweets about Ankeny teen's death bring community together

Heavy hearts are fueling fast thumbs in Ankeny.

Students are using their phones to grieve the death of a classmate by posting messages on Twitter in a quest to celebrate her life.

Tweets about Dyamond Ott's passing began shortly after she died from cancer on Sunday at the age of 18. Late Wednesday night following a candlelight vigil in her honor, students began a campaign to make her a trending topic on Twitter by posting #diamondslastforever.

"This has brought our school so much closer together," said Maggie Denning, a senior at Ankeny High School. "I walked around school today and everyone is just so upbeat and happy. Everyone has been sad these last few days because of Dyamond — now there's a whole different outlook on it."

Family friend Cody Chapman, a junior at Ankeny High School, came up with the #diamondslastforever trending topic. Students were able to make it a trending topic in the United States late Wednesday night, and they spent Thursday trying to do

it again.

"Everybody thought it was a pretty cool to think Ankeny could do something like that," Chapman, 17, said.

Several students tried to get Justin Bieber to retweet it to his followers because Ott was such a fan of his. Olympic gold-medalist Shawn Johnson retweeted a request to keep Ott's memory going. So did Tyler Sash a rookie safety for the New York Giants and former University of Iowa safety.

Even students from Southeast Polk — one of Ankeny's biggest rivals — were showing support: "In the end, it doesn't matter what school you go to whether it be Ankeny or SEP. when times are tough, we are one."

Denning was in awe of Ott's ability to inspire even after death.

"Ankeny High School is just a better place because of what she's shown us — not to take things for granted," Denning, 17, said.

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Diane Ott, Dyamond's mother, has never been on Twitter, but the online outpouring of support for her daughter left her speechless.

"I thought it was incredible," Ott said. "Everybody was texting me (Wednesday) night just telling me how it was going wild."

Dyamond Ott received a donated liver and kidney when she was 13. She worked with tutors for two years to stay at grade level so she could graduate with her classmates last year, said Diane Ott. Last January she was diagnosed with a brain tumor, which was surgically removed and treated with radiation.

In November, doctors discovered Dyamond had developed cancer in her abdomen from the transplant. She was being treated in Omaha when her heart stopped. Doctors tried for an hour to bring her back.

"Her little heart was done," Diane Ott said. "She fought her fight until the very last minute."

Dyamond would have loved the attention from the Twitter campaign, Diane Ott said, because it helps to promote organ donation and giving people a second chance at life.

"Just getting that out there, if that would just spark anyone's thought on organ donation she would be very, very happy," Ott said.

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