

SPECIAL REPORT**#DiamondsLastForever Meets #HeartForJoe**

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By Aly Cappaert

Joe Tourte, left, and Dyamond Ott, right.



With finals being only one week away, students at Ankeny High School usually devote most of their attention on their studying and plans for winter break. This year, though, attention from the students and even teachers has been on two very important people that have made a lasting impact on the town, Dyamond Ott and Joe Tourte. On the evening of December 14, and into the early morning hours of December 15, the stories of these two wonderful people didn't only get out to the whole town of Ankeny, not only to the people of Iowa, but to people throughout the entire country.

Dyamond Ott, a 2011 graduate of Ankeny High School, passed away at the age of 18 on Sunday, December 11, 2011 after a lifelong battle with health problems. As a teenager, she went through more than most other teens could ever imagine. She fought through many health battles including cancer and a liver and kidney transplant. Dyamond was loved by many and an influence to many students throughout the high school, whether they were close with her or not. She was a positive person and has left such a positive impact on this town.

Joe Tourte is a current student at Ankeny High School who always has a smile on his face that is enough to brighten everyone's day. Unfortunately, Joe hasn't been in school to show off his contagious smile for the past month. Instead, he has been at the University of Iowa Hospitals where he is awaiting a heart transplant. Students around the school have been showing support for Joe by raising money to help pay family expenses, and hopefully that'll get him back to school with his classmates.

On the evening of December 14, many people throughout the community attended a candlelight ceremony that was held in honor of Dyamond Ott, which then started a mission for Ankeny students to show their love for their former classmate. Following the ceremony, a few students got on their twitter accounts and simply tweeted #diamondslastforever. It didn't take long before these tweets became viral. Anyone and everyone with a Twitter account in Ankeny jumped on the bandwagon to support this cause, and also took the opportunity to support their classmate Joe Tourte as well by tweeting #heartforjoe. Not long after the tweets spread throughout Ankeny, tweets were spreading at an insane rate all throughout Iowa. People of all towns, even students from rival high schools Southeast Polk and Valley, showed their support for Ott and Tourte.

With the whole state of Iowa coming together to support, Ankeny students had another goal they wanted to reach, get these topics trending on Twitter. To become a trending topic on Twitter, the topic must be tweeted so many times within an hour. The odds that a town in Iowa could get a topic trending on Twitter definitely were not very promising, but still, no one gave up. Students and other people in the community tweeted their favorite celebrities explaining Dyamond's story and asked them to help get #diamondslastforever as a trending topic. Luckily, people including Tyler Sash, Adrian Clayborne, Michael Vick, and Chelsea Handler jumped in to help the people of Ankeny get the topic trending.

Shortly after midnight on December 15, the students of Ankeny reached their goal, #diamondslastforever became a trending topic not only in Iowa, but in the entire country. Within a matter of hours, Dyamond Ott's story reached out to an entire nation. The tweets weren't about to slow down either. Up until about 3 a.m. on December 15, tweets were being posted every couple of seconds with #diamondslastforever and #heartforjoe. With so many people in the community supporting them, Dyamond Ott and Joe Tourte have made an everlasting impact on Ankeny.

