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Sun woman

A HEARTBREAKING TALE OF INSPIRATION

By AMANDA REVELL WALTON

WORK hard, get awards, study, publish a poetry book, continue bass guitar, be a prom queen, get noticed...

These were some of the aims 13-year-old Lydia Price wrote on the secret Wish List stored on her mobile phone.

A list that only came to light days after she died from Sudden Adult Death Syndrome.

Discovery of the list brought extra agony to her grieving family, knowing that Lydia was no longer here to fulfil her hopes and desires.

But it has also brought them unexpected solace – after Lydia's friends and teachers at her secondary school, the Oxford Spire Academy, made it their mission to make all of her wishes come true.

Mum Kate Daniels, 39, says: "At first Lydia's Wish List made her loss so much worse.

"The hurt was unbearable because she had wanted to do so much.

"But it's ended up being a tremendous comfort to us all because the response to it has been unbelievable. It's become such an inspiration."

Kate split up with Michael Price when Lydia was just a toddler. But dad Michael, 50, remained living near the family home in Oxford and was very much a part of family life.

And her older sisters, Erin and Luvenia, doted on little Lydia.

Luvenia Price, 20, says: "She was such an entertainer, a real comedian. She had the biggest personality in the family, always laughing and joking and doing impressions and different accents. She'd often have us all crying with laughter."

Erin Daniels, 23, adds: "Whenever she talked she'd always wave her arms around. It was like she had so much to say sometimes, she just couldn't get it out fast enough."

Baffled

Lydia died on January 23 last year. Kate recalls: "It was a typical Saturday night. Lydia was on her laptop, listening to music, laughing and joking around, then we all settled down to watch a film.

"When I went to bed, Lydia shouted, 'Night! Love you!' And I said the same back to her."

They were the last words Kate would ever hear her daughter speak. The next day she was woken by a panic-stricken Luvenia, who couldn't rouse Lydia.

Kate says: "I rushed into her bedroom and saw that Lydia wasn't breathing or moving.

"I knew deep down she'd gone but another part of me wouldn't believe it.

"I screamed for Luvenia to call an ambulance. Erin and Luvenia tried to give her the kiss of life but it was no good.

"Within minutes there was an ambulance and a helicopter had landed round the corner. There must have been about 12 paramedics in the house. They were working on her for ages and, in the end, they managed to get a very faint pulse."

Lydia was taken to the city's John Radcliffe Hospital and put on a ventilator. But after two days on life support, the doctors told Kate and Michael there was no hope for their daughter.

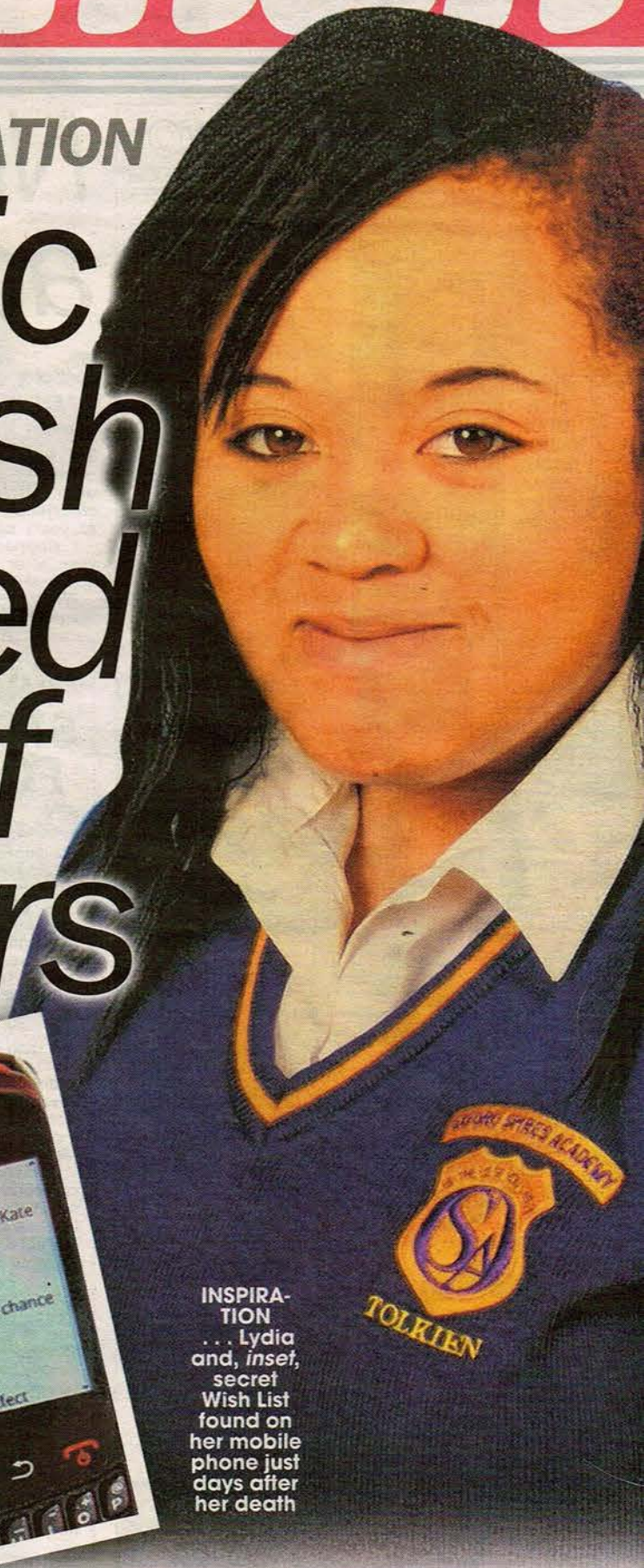
"We were hoping for a miracle," says Kate. "I just couldn't understand how the night before she'd been laughing and joking and then the next morning she was gone. It was just so sudden.

"I kept saying, 'Why did this happen to Lydia? It should have been me!' Her dad was saying it should have been him. The whole family was in shock."

Despite having had no previous heart problems, Lydia had had a cardiac arrest during the night.

She was a victim of Sudden

How tragic Lydia's wish list inspired dozens of youngsters



INSPIRATION
 ... Lydia and, inset, secret Wish List found on her mobile phone just days after her death



Adult Death Syndrome. Kate says: "Her death is a mystery. The doctors were absolutely baffled. They said they'd done everything they could but there was no sign of life and no brain activity.

"Even when they switched the ventilator off I was still hoping she'd suddenly start breathing.

"I held her in my arms. It took about ten minutes for her heart to stop beating.

"After that, I just cuddled her. Her dad and her sisters held her hand. I found it so hard to leave her, I kept going back into the room and cuddling her."

Lydia's funeral took place on February 10 and a few days later, Kate found the Wish List on her phone.

Under the heading "Lydia's School and Year 9 Promises", were 45 ambitions. Erin says: "I knew I had to show the school all these things

she'd wanted to achieve, so I printed it out and framed it and gave it to her favourite teacher.

"Then the other teachers started to read it and it went into the school newsletter – and before long everyone learned about it."

Within a month, the school had created an award, the Lydia Price Trophy For Excellence Through Endeavour, which is given annually to a student who demonstrates Lydia's hard-working qualities.

Spirit

In doing so they fulfilled the first wish on Lydia's list – "get awards".

Erin says: "Lydia spent a lot of time revising. She wanted top grades in everything. Now she's got her own award."

A few months later another two wishes came true – "write poems with the school poet Kate Clanchy" and "get poetry book published" –

when the school published Journeys, which contained some of Lydia's poems.

The book was created by their writer-in-residence Kate Clanchy and six pupils.

In July last year, the school launched an annual scholarship for guitar lessons in Lydia's name, ticking off two more wishes – continue bass guitar, learn electric guitar.

And on the anniversary of her death last month, a major wish was granted with the opening of a Reflection Room at the school.

Equipped with bean bags, lava lamps and rugs, it features a photo of Lydia and her Wish List and is a place for pupils to remember Lydia and the qualities she stood for.

The school is also posting Lydia's wishes on a website, so each pupil can tick off whichever one they have done.

Erin says: "Lydia may no longer

MY TEAM: Dulcie Pearce,
Nikki Watkins, Lauren Naylor,
Jenny Francis and Jennifer Tippett

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PROUD . . .
mum Kate
holds a
photo of
Lydia, with
Luvenia, left,
and Erin;
above left,
Lydia; above
right, Luvenia
has sister's
name on her
nails



**'Lydia may
no longer be
with us but
she's here
in spirit'**

be with us but she is in spirit. Her list has inspired everyone at the school to get together and do everything that she wanted to do.

"One of her wishes was 'Write Mr and Mrs Coakley a poem for their baby', so someone is taking on that task. Of her wish to 'Become prom queen' some of the girls have said, 'If I win, it's for Lydia.'"

The family later found another list - All The Things I Want To Do Before I Die.

Kate says: "I came across it when I was sorting her room out. She had a diary and she put everything in there. She was such a deep thinker."

This list details 28 wishes from "Visit and help deprived parts of the world", to "End wars, racism, inequality, injustice" and "Give to charity".

One of Lydia's priorities was to "Make sure what happened to Charlotte doesn't happen to any other child".

Her cousin Charlotte Nott, now four, caught meningitis as a toddler and needed to have all four limbs amputated.

Legacy

Her plight has been followed by The Sun over the years.

Kate says: "Her first wish was to 'Open a children's hospital' so she could help youngsters like Charlotte."

Kate, who visits her daughter's grave every morning and evening, adds: "None of her wishes surprised me though."

"She was always saying to me, 'It doesn't matter what race you are, or what disabilities you have, I just want everyone to be treated the

same and then this world will be a better place.'"

One wish Lydia has fulfilled herself is among the last on her list - "Be noticed".

And on her second list she writes, "Make a change: I want to one day lay on my death bed thinking, 'What have I done with my life?' with the answer being, 'Enough to change just one person's life.'"

Erin says: "She's certainly done that. Lydia has been a big inspiration, even though she is no longer with us."

"And she'll continue to be noticed with this wonderful legacy she has unwittingly created and left behind."

● **Donate to the Charlotte Nott fund at charlottesappeal.com. Find out more about Lydia and her Wish List online at lydiaprince.co.uk.**