

Crash claims lives of vibrant mom and daughter

Charlotte MacAulay, Nov 17, 2021



Mother and daughter Melissa and Layla MacDonald died as the result of a traffic collision on Route 4 in Cardigan on November 14. Submitted photo

Melissa MacDonald was a loving mother, wife, coach and community leader. She was patient, loving and kind, a person who always saw the good before the bad.

Her young daughter Layla was a passionate, fun-loving eight year old. She had a beautiful smile that could only be described as contagious.

The mother and daughter from Eglington died as the result of a tragic motor vehicle collision on Sunday afternoon.

They leave to mourn a loving husband and father, Adam, and son and brother, Alex.

'Coach Mac', as Melissa was known in the Kings County Football family, was "an awesome coach, a wonderful friend an amazing human being," club president Shawn Fraser said. "She was all about sports and how they helped kids develop as both athletes and people."

Layla shared that passion with her mother early on.

"Layla was the starting centre for every team she played on and was often found working on her snaps (hikes) outside of practice," Mr Fraser added.

"She was a spitfire who was full of energy and always had a big smile on her face."

Melissa coached both flag and tackle football teams and was involved in all aspects of the club over the past four years.

"They both loved the game and were most often always on the sidelines even if it was older teams," Mr Fraser said.

Layla was also passionate about the sport of lacrosse and being a member of the Girl Guide organization.

The tragedy is a huge loss for the school and French community at École la Belle Cloche in Rollo Bay where Layla was a Grade 4 student.

“She was larger than life and she didn’t have a mean bone in her body,” Tina Peters-White, administrative assistant at the school, said. “If her friends needed assistance, she always accompanied them to the office.”

Melissa spent several years as a board member of Comité Acadien et Francophone de l’Est, CAFE and two years on the staff of the community organization as a director general, Ms Peters-White said.

“She would drop whatever she was doing for anyone or anything if her assistance was needed,” she added.

“She loved and cared passionately, and was quick to tear up when others were suffering.”

Both will be greatly missed by the entire community.

Kings District RCMP Sergeant Leanne Butler said police were called to the scene of the collision at 3 pm. Preliminary findings showed an SUV travelling south on Route 4 (Cardigan), crossed the centre line and struck the MacDonalds, who were travelling north, head on.

The SUV driver was taken to the QEH and then airlifted to Halifax with severe, non-life threatening injuries, according to police.

Melissa and Layla passed away at the scene.

“It is too early in the investigation to determine whether any charges will be laid,” Sgt Butler said.

As of Monday morning RCMP had one witness to the collision, but Sgt Butler is asking anyone else who was in the area at the time to come forward.

Members of the Cardigan Volunteer Fire Department, Island EMS and Victims Services assisted at the scene.

Classes at École La Belle Cloche were cancelled on Tuesday, but the school was open in the afternoon for all students for counselling, to get together with friends, or to work in the library. Teachers, counsellors and staff were on-site and classes resumed on Wednesday.

“Our hearts are broken and we aren’t quite sure how we are going to get through this,” Ms Peters-White said.

“They will both be loved and missed by everyone who knew them,” Mr Fraser said.

A GoFundMe, Support the MacDonald Family, has been set up by friends of the family. “Donations received in Melissa and Layla’s memory will go to help support Adam and Alex as they navigate through this tragedy.”

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