

Deborah Webster commemorative, impact statement regarding Hannah Webster.

Friday 13th 1996, my third baby Hannah Louise was born. She was so tiny, she was so perfect. Hannah was the baby of the family and had two older siblings, Leah who was 7 and Simon who was 3. Our family was complete. Hannah was a good baby and even from a young age she was eager to learn. Her hair was so blonde she looked like she was bald, when it did grow it was so fluffy it looked like candy floss, so I gave her the nickname floss.

Hannah was always forward for her age. When she started nursery, she instantly took to it. Her first Christmas at nursery she played Mary in the school nativity, she looked so cute and I was so proud I cried. Hannah started infant school, although she was a bit shy, she soon fitted in and made friends. These friend's she has had her whole life.

When they were small, on a Saturday, Hannah, Leah, Simon, and her cousins would all sleep at their grandparent's house. Every Sunday, my mum would say they aren't staying again, but the following Saturday they'd have them all over again. They all formed a strong bond together and were really close, especially with her cousin Rebecca, who was nearly the same age.

When Hannah was about 7 she was doing so well at school. The teacher said she was a gifted child and was in the top 4 percent in the country. My Hannah was unique. Even though she was a dream child she also had a stubborn streak - if you upset her, you'd certainly know about it. When Hannah was 11, she had her prom at junior school. Leah decided to do her hair and it didn't turn out quite right, boy, did Leah know about it.

Hannah then went to Earlseaton High School. She loved learning and was adored by both pupils and teachers.

Hannah was a free spirit, she did what she wanted to do. One Christmas she decided she wanted a guitar. Noone could show her how to use it, for months we had to listen to her strumming it while singing to the cat.

Hannah's grandparents had a caravan at Flamborough. These were some of the best holidays we ever had. We'd all go, aunties and cousins, how we all fitted in I don't know, but somehow, we did. One year, her grandad paid for all the family to go to Disneyland. 13 of us went. We had such a good time, that we all then went to Spain. Hannah decided it wasn't warm enough and kept her coat on for 3 days. In Hannah's short life, she did see a bit of the world: Disneyland, Spain, Crete, Greece, Portugal and a cruise down the Nile. Hannah had caught the travel bug. She knew we wanted to go to university, and she knew she wanted to work abroad.

As Leah was a few years older than Hannah she took on the role of being her second mum. Everywhere her sister went, so did Hannah. If I said no to something, she would go to her sister, who always said yes.

Hannah was 10 when her first nephew was born. Over the next few years, she was aunty to 2 more nephews. Hannah idolised all three of them.

Hannah loved spending time with just me and her. Shopping and a meal at Nandos. We would put the world to rights, but Hannah's favourite meal was homemade stew and pancakes.

Hannah loved music and she enjoyed going out with friends, but she never let her schoolwork slip through. She sailed through school and passed all her exams.

When Hannah was 18, I started to see a change in her. She was struggling with her sexuality and pressure of college. She told me she'd been using recreational drugs after a suicide attempt. She was under mental health services, Hannah was diagnosed with BPD a few weeks later.

She was a bridesmaid for her sister, we all had a fantastic day, and both my girls looked radiant. Soon after that Hannah got a letter she had been waiting for. She had got a place at Essex University; she was over the moon. I had my doubts, I wanted her to take a year out, but there was no stopping her. Hannah did seem to be coping, so I gave my blessings. Hannah was the first person in our family to go to university, I was so proud of her, after all the hard work she had put in she deserved her place at uni.

Hannah decided she was going to take driving lessons. All of a sudden she changed her mind as she wanted a motorbike instead. So she passed her bike exam and got a motorbike. A big motorbike, how she rode it I don't know, but somehow, she did. University was everything she thought it would be. She loved the diversity of it all. It wasn't long before her bike followed her to Essex. I used to go to visit Hannah at University and I stayed in student accommodation a couple of times. She couldn't wait to show me around, pretend you're a student, she would say.

We would go clothes shopping in Colchester town. Not to the big shops - she loved the second-hand shops. She had a thing for vintage clothes and quirky jumpers. She got a shell suit one time, I told her I had one like it 20 odd years ago, but it did suit her. I've still got it to this day, same as her favourite perfume Ghost. I still buy it now.

Another time, we went food shopping. Hannah wouldn't let us get a taxi back to the University, so we had to walk about 1 mile with the shopping trolley. We couldn't stop laughing.

Hannah loved festivals but couldn't afford to go to them all. She became a marshal so she could get in for free. When Hannah wasn't at University, she loved to go to Castle Hill at Huddersfield. She thought it was like being on top of the world, and she would spend hours there.

Hannah had a thing for elephants she loved them. An elephant never forgets. She even had a tattoo of one. Hannah had a thing for post it notes, they would be everywhere. I have still got loads of them now, with little notes she'd written.

For a while, Hannah seemed her normal self. Then she had to find her own student accommodation off campus. Hannah's mental health started to deteriorate. I asked Hannah to come home, but she wouldn't. One minute she would talk to me, the next minute she wouldn't.

Over a couple of years, Hannah had been to hospital and seen doctor's numerous of times, but felt she wasn't getting any help. Early in 2017, Hannah was told she was dyslexic.

On 12th March 2017, Hannah ran the Colchester marathon. We never knew about this until after her passing. She was also having relationship issues. Hannah was in crisis, she was embarrassed about her mental health, she shouldn't have been, but she was. She had been let down so many times by the NHS, it took a lot of persuasion to let the police take her to hospital. After an assessment she was sent home. Once again, she was let down.

On 11th May 2017, Hannah was found. Her life had ended. She was 20 years old. That day a part of me died too. Hannah might have been 20, but she was still my baby. My Hannah was beautiful inside and out. She was intelligent and funny. People loved to be in her company. My Hannah was unique. I wish she could have seen it in herself. Hannah didn't need to and shouldn't have died.

On 12th May, my life changed forever. Words can't ever express the heart break and devastation I feel. Time doesn't heal and the pain never goes away. Every day is a challenge, trying to get through each day without breaking down takes its toll, and by the end of each day I'm exhausted. I can't watch certain things on tv and can't listen to certain music, as so many things trigger me.

Hannah was a funny, kind, thoughtful and beautiful young girl. I have never heard anyone say a bad word about her. So many things remind me of Hannah. One minute I am OK, the next I'm fighting off tears. People think after 7 years I should be over it, so now if I get upset I pretend it's for another reason. Some people think I should celebrate Hannah's life. Maybe one day I will, but for now I am still grieving. I can't help how I feel.

I will never see Hannah get married or have children. I will never see her smile or her moody face. Family gatherings are one of the worst times for me. Someone always says "isn't it nice we are all here", I just want to scream, "no we aren't all here".

I've still got all of Hannah's clothes. Her coat at the back door, her motorbike in the shed, her phone in the drawer. I have still got her computer, but I haven't been able to look at it.

Hannah would have been 21 on 13th December 2017. Instead of having a party, Essex University planted a memorial tree in memory of Hannah. It was a lovely day, but not what you should have for your 21st birthday. Because the media reported when Hannah went missing, they also reported when she was found. We didn't want to tell her nephews how their aunty had died until we thought they were ready, but some of the headlines were not sensitive on the internet. In fact, they were awful, so we had to tell them before they were ready. We were already devastated, this just impacted us even more.

It hit Hannah's sister, Leah, really hard, and the pain I've had to see her in is heartbreaking. She is doing better now after the birth of her daughter 2 years ago, she has helped with some of that heartache. A niece for Hannah, a niece she won't ever get to meet. We do talk about Hannah all the time and [my granddaughter] knows her aunty, and she has got her aunt's name.

She's our sunshine on our darkest days. Hannah's brother Simon's way of coping is to not talk about any of it. Another special person in Hannah's life who took it hard was Jamie, her brother-in-law. One time, Hannah was at University. It was near her birthday, and we realised Hannah was on her own. Jamie jumped in his car and drove 4 ½ hours. He picked Hannah up and drove 4 ½ hours back. It's still Jamie that takes us down now, and I'm so grateful to him.

Hannah's friends from home asked if they could have a tree planted at Earlseaton High School. As Essex is so far away, they planted a beautiful blossom tree for her. I never thought Essex would be part of my life, but it is. We try to get down a couple times a year. It brings me a sense of peace. Hannah absolutely loved Colchester, especially Castle Park. One of the last photos Hannah took was of a squirrel in the park, so we've renamed the park, squirrel park.

In 2019, I needed to run in Hannah's footsteps. So, me and some family and friends did the Colchester marathon. Losing Hannah is sometimes like a dream. For a moment you think it's not true, then it hits you like a ton of bricks and all you want to do is scream, "no it's not a dream, it's a nightmare".

I can't ever express how much I love and miss my daughter. It's an honour and a privilege to be Hannah's mum and I am so proud she is my daughter. One of the things that keeps me going is knowing one day I'll be reunited with my baby. Hannah wrote this poem when she was 12, I've always treasured it. I think it sums Hannah up:

“At school, at home, everywhere, people look, people stare. Just because I dress my way, it doesn’t make me weird. Just because I’m shy, doesn’t make me not heard. Just because I listen, doesn’t make me a swot. Just because I’m interested in different things, doesn’t make me boring. Just because I have different answers doesn’t make me wrong. Just because I don’t stand out, it doesn’t make me a copycat. I am different there’s no one like me. Because if there was, I wouldn’t be me.”

Hannah was under EPUT mental health services. All she wanted from them was to be kept safe from herself. They failed.