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Kindergarten teacher mourned

By Carrie Frillman - Staff Writer

Each day before snack time, Marian Beguin gathered with her students to make a wish.

It was always the same request: for all the children in the world to have food, peace and happiness.

It's one of the many traits that made Mrs. Beguin, a kindergarten teacher at Wright Elementary School in Malta, beloved by both her pupils and their parents.

And it's one of many attributes of Mrs. Beguin that they'll miss. Mrs. Beguin, who would have been 55 on Saturday, died Tuesday after being in an automobile accident in Rochelle.

Hannah Mooberry of DeKalb was in Beguin's class last year, and was deeply saddened when her mother, Jennifer, told her Mrs. Beguin had died.

"Mrs. Beguin really seemed to try and remind the kids of the world at large," Jennifer Mooberry said.

Seventeen cars were lined up outside Wright Elementary School on Wednesday afternoon, parked under a flag that had been lowered to half-staff to honor the well-known and well-loved Mrs. Beguin. Flowers planted by Mrs. Beguin's class last year were in bloom near the entrance of the school - a project she referred to as her "kinder garden."

A stillness lingered inside as teachers and faculty members quietly gathered to grieve, exchanging whispers as they struggled to come to terms with the death of a colleague.

It's a pain her family is feeling too. Her husband, David Beguin, recalled the family's annual "woolly bear caterpillar hunts" as some of the memories he will cherish the most about his wife.

The annual fall hunts were a time for the Beguins and their three daughters - Sara, Jessica and Catherine - to relentlessly search for caterpillars before they turned into butterflies.

This year's hunt won't be the same, David Beguin said in a Wednesday evening phone interview.

"I can just tell you that she is my life partner and I'm just going to miss her dearly," he said. "She



The flag outside Wright Elementary School in Malta flies at half-staff Wednesday morning as teachers and school administrators gathered to remember kindergarten teacher Marian Beguin, who died after a Tuesday afternoon automobile accident. "I feel so bad for the people at Wright who are trying to replace her," David Beguin said of his wife. "They are going through the same thing we are and she just cannot ever be replaced." Chronicle photo KATE WEBER

raised three of her own kids and halfway raised hundreds of others.”

Parents of students who had been in Mrs. Beguin's class said the most remarkable thing about the educator was the way she inspired curiosity.

“She would always get a child to seek and wonder, whether it was a worm or caterpillar or a rainbow,” agreed David Beguin. “Whatever it may have been, she always had a way about her that got kids, and even adults, to wonder.”

Mrs. Beguin taught kindergarten in the DeKalb School District for 14 years. Prior to coming to Jefferson Elementary School in DeKalb in 1993, she taught at Creston schools.

She joined the staff at Wright Elementary School three years ago and is remembered fondly by parents, teachers and students.

“We are deeply saddened by the passing of Marian Beguin,” Schools Superintendent Paul Beilfuss said in a news statement the district issued Wednesday. “Marian was a superlative teacher who cared about children, and was very dedicated to their successful educational journey.”

Retired teacher Carol Lindeberg, who taught first grade in a classroom next door to Mrs. Beguin at Jefferson Elementary, admired her colleague's ability to make an impact on students.

“She's probably as nice a lady as you will ever find and is one of the most conscientious teachers you will ever find,” Lindeberg said. “She has a heart of gold and loved every child she dealt with. She is just a very special woman.”

Among the students impacted by Mrs. Beguin were the children of Dr. Dan Monaghan. Now 11, 13 and 15, all three had Mrs. Beguin as their kindergarten teacher.

“Anyone who can keep up with a room full of kids like she did and handle them all has a real talent,” Monaghan said. “She was really special - always bubbly, always energetic. Anyone that had her will tell you the same.”

Mrs. Beguin went above and beyond a teacher's duties, Mooberry said. She would make extra phone calls to let parents know their kids had a great day, or simply to share funny stories that happened in class.

“We loved her so much,” Mooberry said. “We had a barbecue for beautiful Mrs. Beguin and her beau, Mr. Beguin, and we had all ‘B’ foods because she was just so beautiful.”

Breaking the news of the teacher's death to Hannah was especially difficult for Mooberry, who said Mrs. Beguin not only helped ease students' transitions to kindergarten, but parents' transition of sending them as well.

“I told (Hannah) that I had sad news to share with her,” Mooberry said. “I was gently honest. She cried and we hugged a lot. We were blessed to know Mrs. Beguin and we will always remember her.”

Hannah wrote a note Wednesday to Mrs. Beguin to tell her how much she will miss her.

“I love you Mrs. Beguin,” she wrote. “You are the best teacher.”

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