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Hundreds attend memorial for Tustin teen killed in crash

Sunflowers decorate church where friends, family share memories of Mackenzie Frazee.

By **ELYSSE JAMES**

The Orange County Register

Sunflowers, letters and a pair of black sunglasses were laid beside the body of Mackenzie Eileen Frazee before her funeral service Tuesday afternoon.

Large flower arrangements and posters filled with photos and notes decorated the corner of the foyer surrounding the casket, most including sunflowers, Frazee's flower of choice. Inside Red Hill Lutheran Church, a projection screen with a yellow sunflower background proclaimed "A celebration for the life of Mackenzie Eileen Frazee."

Hundreds filled the church during the service, given by the Rev. Seth Britton. The song "Shout to the Lord" played as the casket was carried to the front of the church. At the end of the service, the church's Praise Team performed "Shine Jesus Shine"

as mourners walked outside.

Nicole Frazee was one of three who gave eulogies of the 16-year-old. She shared with the crowd her niece's "individuality, compassion and soul, and love for life" through a story about Frazee waking her daughter one night so the two could walk to Jamba Juice with their cheerleading shorts over their pants, singing the Black Eyed Peas song "My Humps" the whole way.

She told another story of a time when her niece had been fishing and when her fish couldn't be thrown back because the hook had been lodged too deeply, Frazee named the fish and played with it through its last minutes, then insisted on a proper burial.

Nicole Frazee said her niece, who would have been a junior at Foothill High School, had wanted to change the world.

"She was a unique free spirit who threw all inhibition into the wind," she said, adding that Frazee would want everyone to toss their inhibitions, be silly and make someone smile.

"Mackenzie is not gone. She simply exists elsewhere," she said.

Cousin Monique Cantu shared stories of her childhood, using an aunt's good lemons for a lemonade stand and spending afternoons in the pool playing mermaid games. Cantu's nickname was Rainbow, and Frazee's was Sparkle.

"Her nickname, Sparkle, sums her up," Cantu said.

Aunt Jenny Lopez read from a letter she wrote to Mackenzie, calling her a "hilarious, loving and beautiful girl."

Raye Kreidel met Frazee as a student ambassador. The two toured Europe together and became good

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friends.

"She's a sweetheart," Kreidel said. "At first she was really shy and you don't expect what comes out of her mouth once you get to know her. She was a sweet girl. She was just really fun."

Fraze had been a good student, taking classes in art at Foothill High School. Her fifth- and sixth-grade teachers from Deerfield Elementary School in Irvine also attended the service and described her as an "exceptional student."

"She was well-liked by her peers and definitely she had a sparkle to her," said fifth-grade teacher Leann Schweer, standing next to sixth-grade teacher Christine French. "The staff enjoyed having her around. Her grandmother worked at the school. She was always helpful to everyone."

"She had a great spirit," said Carrie Harper, who knew Fraze when she was younger. "She knew every song on the radio."

Fraze died Aug. 28 afters a car crash at La Colina and Newport Avenue. Fraze was pulled by paramedics from the wreckage of a 1998 Mercedes-Benz, but she died from her injuries at Western Medical Center-Santa Ana.

Authorities said the car was sheared into pieces after crashing into a light pole early Thursday morning. The 17-year-old driver of the car has been taken into custody on suspicion of driving under the influence.

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