

Friends say drowning victim was one of a kind; fundraiser and tribute planned

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Salem -

North Shore residents are mourning the death of Jocelyn Callahan, a young woman they describe as a free spirit, who was found Monday morning in the South River basin.



Callahan, 25, reportedly fell in the water after being in downtown Salem that night. She'd had spent some time at her workplace and then went to Dodge Street Bar & Grill, where she was a regular, with a friend.

Police believe the drowning was accidental and friends say she was walking to her home on nearby Peabody Street when the accident occurred. Workers at Shetland Park spotted her body at about 7:30 a.m. Monday near Pickering Wharf.

A pretty brunette with a nose piercing and tattoos, Callahan stood out in a crowd. She had been a cook for about five months at Gulu-Gulu Café, a tight-knit downtown eatery that closed on Monday so employees, friends and family could gather to share memories and condolences.

"She was awesome," said friend and coworker Alicia Marcaurette. "She just had everything."

Friends described Callahan as a unique young woman who loved music and dancing – she was what Marcaurette described as a "rock and roll girl."

Nate Shatswell, a fellow cook, was one of several friends who recalled Callahan's trademark "kitchen dances," something she did at work just for fun and to put a smile on peoples' faces.

Making people smile was something Callahan was good at. A friend of many, she was energetic and always tried to keep the atmosphere upbeat.

"She was such a lively spirit, just full of life," said Laura Walton, manager of Gulu-Gulu's Salem location.

Callahan grew up in Nahant and Swampscott, graduating from Swampscott High School before moving to Salem. She also attended North Shore Community College and before her death was a student at New England Hair Academy in Malden.

Known for having a big heart, the 25-year-old served as a counselor for troubled youths through the Wediko Children's Services and was an advocate for animal rights.

Tiffany St. Ives was one of many people who worked with Callahan the day before her death and saw her when she stopped by that night to hang out and have a drink. "She was happy ... with a flower in her hair, like Jocelyn would," St. Ives said.

An artist, Callahan loved creating jewelry, drawings and tattoo designs. Some of her illustrations will be converted into T-shirts that will be worn at a memorial event and fundraiser in her honor on Friday night. Local band Machine 475 will perform, and the local business community has pitched in, donating items for an auction such as a bike from Salem Cycle.

All proceeds from the event will go to the Callahan family. "We want her family to know if there's anything we can do ... because she was part of our family, too," said St. Ives.

Gulu-Gulu owner Steven Feldmann said Gary and Lynne Callahan plan to put the money toward installing a fence in the spot where their daughter fell in the water, hoping to prevent another tragedy.

Walton said she and some others went by the spot where police believe Callahan slipped into the water and realized how dark it is at night.

Gulu-Gulu reopened Tuesday, albeit with a more somber atmosphere, and posted a message, "We love you Jocelyn," on the chalk board outside the shop.

"She was one of the coolest chicks I ever met. She was one-of-a-kind and I'll never forget her," said coworker Carianne Muise.

Remembering Jocelyn: Tributes and services

A tribute and fundraiser will be held Friday, Aug. 29 at 8 p.m. at Gulu-Gulu Café, 237 Essex St. Machine 475 will perform and there will be an auction. There is a \$10 cover. Proceeds go to the Callahan family.

A private funeral will be held Friday at 9 a.m. from the Solimine, Landergan and Richardson Funeral Home. Friends and family are invited to attend a funeral Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Swampscott on Friday at 10 a.m., or the wake on Thursday from 4-8 p.m.

Donations in Callahan's memory may be made to the Wediko Children's Services, 72-74 East Dedham St., Boston, MA 02118 or the Northeast Animal Shelter, 347 Highland Ave., Salem, MA 01970.