

Lost pals stay alive on Web

Teens grieving online

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Even after her death, Amanda Forsyth's MySpace.com profile beams with life. Pictures of the 16-year-old with her friends rhythmically flash to a Mariah Carey song on the purple Los Angeles Lakers background.

Only the comments left for the bubbly Staten Island teen - and her list of friends, many of whom have changed their user names in her honor - let on to a visitor that something is amiss.

Welcome to teen grief in the Internet age.

"You were so amazing no 1 can top you . . . we will see you soon i know your going to have a fun time upstairs," Necole Martinez, 16, wrote to Amanda, who was hit and killed by a car.

Since the June 11 accident, Amanda's profile has amassed more than 200 heartfelt messages from friends and relatives.

"I miss her and love her so much that I can't hide it, so I express my feelings through e-mails on her page," Necole, now known on MySpace as "I Love You Manda Panda," told the Daily News.

"It's a way for the kids in the community to come together and grieve online," explained Dr. Heidi Horsley, who teaches Intervention for Grief, Loss and Bereavement at Columbia University and is coauthoring a book on teen grief.

"Teenagers feel like they're all alone, and if they have a site where they can log on anytime . . . they're not isolated," Horsley said. "It's a healthy way to continue their bond, even though someone dies."

For friends of murdered honor student Chanel Petro-Nixon, 16, whose strangled body was found in a garbage bag in Crown Heights one week ago, MySpace.com has become a way to honor her.

"We're showing respect," said Danielle Channell, 15, whose user name on MySpace is now "Chanel baby girl come back to us we miss you."

"I took a picture of her and put in under my profile and wrote under it, because I want her to be remembered," said Danielle, hours before Chanel's wake took place July 6.

"I will always want her to be with me, I wouldn't want to erase her from my memory."

Five months after Mariana Edkins, 18, was killed in a car crash by a drugged-out driver, her MySpace account is still an outlet for her friends' grief.



Amanda Forsyth was hit and killed by a car on June 11.



Honor student Chanel Petro-Nixon was murdered.

"I cant believe its the first summer without you here," wrote her best friend Jessica this week. "It still seems unreal like your goin to come back..."

The posthumous message, one of nearly 350, touched Mariana's mother to the point of tears.

"It's comforting that they're still talking to her as if she's alive," said Mary Ann Edkins in a trembling voice. "They still have a relationship with her, beyond death. They're talking to her on that space."

Her reaction echoed Horsley's professional opinion. "I think it's very important for the families to know that their kids did not die in vain and they will not be forgotten," she said.

Amanda's sister, Jessica Forsyth, 22, agreed.

"After a while, all the people stop coming by, but you want to log on and still see that every day people are writing comments to her," she said. "It makes you feel like you're not alone."

But as time passes, so does the apparent need to contribute to these Internet memorials.

Messages for Masha Fishman, 16, of Edison, N.J., one of five campers killed in a hellish Catskills crash last August, have dwindled on her Meetspot.com profile.

"I wish people could stil give u messages like before . . . is almost a yeara dn i dont know wut happened to time," her friend Roman wrote.

"We still think u sumewher around," wrote Stas Kargobolov, 17 of Bensonhurst.

While there are still traditional ways of mourning, Horsley says the Internet trend isn't going away.

"They still set up candles, write on posters and come together physically, but this is a 2-4/7 thing that you do on your own in the comfort of your bedroom," she said.

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