

Young Catholic activist among Canadian victims of plane crash in Ethiopia

Among 18 Canadians who died in a March 10 plane crash in Ethiopia was a graduate of Toronto's Catholic school system who had just been accepted into teachers' college.

Danielle Moore is being remembered as a passionate young woman whose life was dedicated to helping others. She was 24.

She was among the 157 passengers and crew who died when their plane bound for Nairobi, Kenya, crashed shortly after takeoff from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 10.

Also among the 18 Canadian dead were six members of a Brampton, Ont., family, a professor from Ottawa's Carleton University and a former university classmate of Moore, Angela Rehorn, who was a graduate of Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School in Orillia, Ont.

Five of the 18 – including Moore and Rehorn – were on route to Nairobi for the United Nations Environment Assembly. Dozens of the victims were humanitarian workers.

For the past year, Moore worked with a Canada Learning Code team in Winnipeg. She helped youth throughout Manitoba, northwestern Ontario and Nunavut “dream of what is possible and empower them with the skills and confidence to change the world through technology, while bringing Canadians from diverse backgrounds together,” said Melissa Sariffodeen, CEO of Canada Learning Code, in a statement released March 11.

“Danielle was a smart, passionate and a friendly woman who dedicated her life to helping others,” said Sariffodeen. “So much so that she would often take her vacation days to volunteer for the causes that were dear to her heart.”

Moore was a graduate of Francis Libermann Catholic High School in Scarborough. She was valedictorian of the Class of 2012 before moving to Halifax where she studied marine biology at Dalhousie University, graduating in 2017. After graduation she relocated to Winnipeg.

In a tweet, Francis Libermann school said the community was “saddened” by the loss of Moore.

“Our condolences and prayers go out to the Moore family, as well as the other families of those who lost loved ones,” said the tweet.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board joined the high school in offering

its sympathy to the Moore family.

“Danielle was an outgoing and friendly student, who was well liked by her peers. She was actively involved in a number of school groups and initiatives, especially those relating to the environment,” the board said in a statement.

“Our heartfelt prayers go out to the entire Moore family, and all those who knew Danielle, as they mourn this tragic loss.”

Jodie Layne, a co-worker of Moore, posted on Instagram that “Danielle sparkled.”

“It’s hard to imagine Danielle as anything but fully alive,” posted Layne.

“Danielle was one of the most optimistic, bright, lively, curious, inquisitive, kind, generous, optimistic, effervescent and determined people I have ever known.... She was committed to justice and the environment and the people she loved.”

The Pinnguaq Association, a not-for-profit working with rural and remote communities in Canada’s north, was among the partners Moore worked with in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

“Danielle had a smile that would brighten any room. Kids responded to her quiet demeanour by making her proud,” it said in a statement. “It’s impossible to overstate how much we will miss what she offered not just Nunavut but the world.”

In a Facebook post, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board offered its thoughts on Rehorn, and acknowledged her “passion for social justice and environmentalism.”

“Even though she has left us way too soon, Angela’s contributions to the betterment of our world were meaningful and important – her enthusiasm, talent and compassion will be greatly missed,” the board said.

The list of Canadian victims in the crash also included:

- Amina Ibrahim Odowa, 33, and five-year-old daughter Sofia Abdulkadir of Edmonton;
- Calgary accountant Derick Lwugi, 53;
- Pius Adesanmi, the director of Carleton University’s Institute of African Studies, who was raised in a Catholic family and in Catholic schools in his native Nigeria;
- Pannagesh and Hansini Vaidya, along with their daughter Kosha, son-in-law Prerit Dixit and grandchildren Ashka and Anushka, all of Brampton;
- Micah Messent of Vancouver, who was heading for the UN Environment Assembly, as was Darcy Belanger of Edmonton and Stephanie Lacroix of Ottawa;
- Peter deMarsh of Taymouth, N.B., chair of the International Family Forestry

Alliance;

- Ottawa native Jessica Hyla, who worked for the UN High Commission for Refugees.

Pope Francis offered prayers for the passengers in a telegram.

“Having learned with sadness of the Ethiopian Airlines plane crash, His Holiness Pope Francis offers prayers for the deceased from various countries and commends their souls to the mercy of almighty God. Pope Francis sends heartfelt condolences to their families, and upon all who mourn this tragic loss he invokes the divine blessings of consolation and strength,” said the March 11 telegram from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

-With files from Catholic News Service