

CLEVELAND Jewish News.com

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Tricia M. Luxenburg, teacher and convert to Judaism, was 32

Tricia M. Luxenburg (née Sorg), a teacher who enjoyed working with at-risk children, died May 22 at age 32.

Mrs. Luxenburg was “a superb teacher,” says Tom Schmida, president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union. She was “creative, vibrant, fully invested in her work, and totally committed to the children in her charge.”



Luxenburg

Beginning her career with the Lakewood Schools, Mrs. Luxenburg joined the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School System in 2003. She was known for her unique ability to reach out to children and their families, particularly those students who were academically, mentally, and socio-economically disadvantaged.

She was involved with the FAST (Family And Schools Together) program to improve relationships between the children, families and the school, resulting in improved family participation. Mrs. Luxenburg's husband shares a story of a second-grader whose father said that sometimes it was okay to miss a day of school. The child responded, “No, I have to get to school to see Mrs. Luxenburg.”

She and two other teachers began a program called “Young Ladies of Noble,” teaching etiquette and community service along with academics.

At her first diagnosis of breast cancer, five months into her fourth pregnancy, Mrs. Luxenburg began chemotherapy. The school principal and CH-UH

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superintendent joined a fundraising program begun by staff and students that allowed teachers to donate their own unused sick days to help Mrs. Luxenburg and other ill teachers.

A Catholic prior to her marriage, Mrs. Luxenburg had been contemplating conversion to Judaism, as each of her children was converted and she was raising them Jewish. When suddenly faced with her fast-deteriorating health, in December 2005, she decided to convert. As she was already living a Jewish life, her conversion was able to be fast-tracked, and Rabbi Edward Sukol performed the ceremony while she was in the hospital. She was given the Hebrew name Chaia.

Mrs. Luxenburg was a graduate of Bay Village High School. She earned her bachelor's degree from Kent State University and her master's degree from Baldwin-Wallace College. She was a member of Congregation Bethaynu.

Mrs. Luxenburg is survived by her husband of six years, Mitchel; daughters Miranda Taylor and Lauren Ashley; sons Maxwell Tyler and Ethan Alexander; brothers James of Houston, Texas, Jeff of Columbus and John Sorg. Contributions may be sent to Tricia Luxenburg Memorial Scholarship c/o Charter One Bank, 28789 Chagrin Blvd., B581, Woodmere 44122.

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