



Marden High School

Friday 21st April 2023

Dear All

This week has been one during which we have been trying to come to terms with an enormous loss in our community. As I am sure you will be aware, Alan Shields, our Student Support Manager, suffered a heart attack during the Easter holiday and passed away last Thursday. This has been sad news for us all, and of course devastating for Alan's close family who have been overwhelmed by the huge numbers of kind messages that have been written in memory of Alan. I know his family has been comforted by these tributes during this difficult time.

It has been good though to have the children and staff back in school this week so that they can continue to process what has happened with their friends and colleagues. There have been many moments this week when we have recollected and been able to celebrate what Mr Shields means to us and what he has done for us in supporting so many people with his positive interventions. The Memories board we have set up in the Learning Resource Centre is now full of messages from students and staff, and with time we will want to think about a permanent memorial to Alan in the school, and students and staff have already started to discuss what this will look like. Alan leaves a legacy of fostering mutual respect and he had a sense of optimism in the way he interacted with the students which was at once motivating and confidence inspiring. I have said to all students and staff this week that this legacy of love, respect and optimism is what Alan would have wanted us all to continue in our lives at Marden and in the wider world.

Alan had a heart of gold and was always looking out for other people, both in school and at home in his own community, and so there are literally thousands of people who have been positively impacted upon by their interactions with him. Here is what four of our young people have written about Alan Shields, God bless his soul.

Mr Alan Shields was a caring, kind, considerate man with a heart of gold. He would always put other people before himself. He was a role model to many, many students as well as teachers. Students could speak to Mr Shields about anything. Whether it was something personal or having a laugh and a joke with him. He was one of the most down to earth people. He would tell you if

you were misbehaving or praising you for something you had achieved, but also you could speak to him like a mate. He was loved by so many and disliked by none. He will be a big miss to me, Marden and everybody that knew him. He may be gone but we will never forget him. JB

As your gold plaque said, you were a fixer of everything, including me. The impact you made on my life is immeasurable and I will never stop thanking you for all the countless things you have done for me and for others. You caringly helped me through times where I could see no light; you meant more to me than you will ever know.

You knew me before I even knew myself. You knew exactly how to make me feel better and exactly how to make me smile. I felt like I could be myself around you, and losing you feels like I am losing a piece of myself. Not a single person can match the significance you held, not just in my life but everyone else's.

I am still in disbelief that I won't be able to see you again, to hear your remarks about Mrs Reece's shoe size and your stupid dad jokes that cheered everyone in your presence. I am also sad that you won't be here for my big moments, GCSEs, that results day hug you promised.

It was an honour to know you and one that I will never forget as long as I live. HB

I could say a lot about Mr. Shields, but if I had to define his personality in three words I would say funny, kind, and caring. Mr Shields has helped me through so so much throughout my time at Marden. He was a great role model and never failed to put a smile on my face even through the hardest times. Mr Shields was the teacher that I trusted more than anyone else in this school and if I had a problem I would have no trouble going to him and discussing it. In my eyes Mr Shields was the father of the Marden family due to the time and effort he put into helping and supporting people when needed. It is amazing to think about how many lives that one man impacted and never gave up making everyone feel safe and happy in Marden. I will never forget the care and kindness that he showed for me to keep me on track with my school life. Mr Shields' legacy is

everlasting in this school and I will miss him but no matter what I'm going to continue making him proud. TH

Mr Shields became a massive role model for me early into my time at Marden as he showed me kindness and gave me the confidence I needed to battle through school very early into my time at Marden. He was always the first one to notice when I was having a tough day and would always pull me aside to have a chat with me and see what he could do to help. He would do so much for other pupils who are currently at Marden and previously at Marden where he also became that role model they needed in their life and sometimes even a father figure. He was a brilliant person who would always put a smile on your face whatever day it was and whenever you needed it. I know he was a massive part of my brother's school life when he could have just walked away and showed him no attention but he embraced his differences and created an environment where my brother felt comfortable. I remember my brother being excited to get into school because of the connection they shared which he had with nobody else other than Mr Shields and my dad. I am so glad I met him as he helped me tremendously with my feelings and gave me some valuable life lessons I hold to this day. Mr Shields had a heart of gold and changed so many lives for the better so I will never forget him as I shared a special connection with an unlikely friend who had a huge part in turning me into the man I am today and for that I say thank you Mr Shields you are a hero.

AS



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher