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DAD SAYS DRIVER 'DID NOTHING WRONG ... I FEEL TERRIBLE FOR HER'

'NOBODY'S FAULT'

By **RICHARD WEIR** and **BILL HUTCHINSON**
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In a remarkable act of kindness that surely would have made his daughter smile, Ted Geier yesterday consoled the driver who accidentally struck and killed his little girl.

The Queens father set aside his own grief to heed the wishes Hallie expressed in a poem she wrote when she was just 5: "People, be nice to each other."

"It's a tragedy. It's nobody's fault," the father told the 34-year-old woman who was driving the Ford Explorer that hit the spunky 11-year-old as she walked her puppy Saturday in front of her Sunnyside Gardens home. "I told her what Hallie would have wanted for her: to wake up in the morning and not think of this, and to bring joy into her life."

Geier, 44, spent yesterday morning making his daughter's funeral arrangements, but the pain in his heart only drove him to ease the pain of a stranger.

"She's a good soul," he said of the woman who hit Hallie when the girl stepped between two parked cars on 46th St. and into the path of the vehicle.

"She did nothing wrong," Geier said of the driver, who lives in his neighborhood. "I knew she was in pain. I feel terrible for her."

The woman behind the wheel told the Daily News that the magnanimous gesture from the grieving father helped ease her torment.

"He's a good man and he has a very good heart," said the tearful woman, who asked that her name be withheld.

Geier told the woman about Hallie, a sixth-grader at the Clinton School for Writers and Artists in Manhattan who raised

money for children afflicted with AIDS in Africa.

He told her of the auburn-haired angel who loved animals so much she became a vegetarian, who penned poetry about stray cats, ice cream and her aunt's "perfect mash potatoes."

"She was a great kid with a big heart," said the woman, breaking into sobs.

But no matter how forgiving the father, she said she will never be able to shake the wrenching memory of Hallie's death.

"I wake up every morning and I go to bed every night thinking about this," she said. "I can't imagine not thinking about this for the rest of my life."

She said she spent Saturday morning packing to move to Long Island, where she planned to start a new job and a new life. She had borrowed her father's SUV to move her things.

"I was just moving the car around the block, that's it," said the woman, who immediately stopped after the accident and rushed to Hallie's side.

"I was sitting there holding her hand," the woman recalled. "She kept trying to get up. I told her to lay still."

Even then, she said, Hallie's father showed her compassion.

"I was shaking like a leaf," she said. "I was crying hysterically. I was in shock, and he was concerned about my welfare."

Ted Geier spent part of yesterday watching a videotape of Hallie's performance last week as Sally in a production of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at the Main Street Theatre on Roosevelt Island.

He later walked into her bedroom, found a book of poems she wrote and began to read one: "I sit in the old maple," Hallie wrote. "Through its wide swaying branches, I see the blue sky. A rainbow arcs across it. A bird sings. I am at home."

The father explained that the maple tree was the one Hallie had climbed in the backyard of her grandparents' house just hours before she died.

"She will inspire," said Ted

Geier, who, with his wife and two older children, plans to start the Hallie Geier Fund to raise money for all the charities his daughter eagerly supported.

At Hallie's school yesterday, a large sky-blue bulletin board in the main hall was filled with notes to her.

"You taught me lessons and just how to be a better person," wrote a classmate named Perrie.

"You were the sweetest of them all," wrote a pal named Jamie.

"I hope you will keep your quirky smile," wrote a friend named Sophia.

"She was really a genuine kid," said principal Joseph Cassidy. "There was no pretense about her. Every kid is special, but she had lots of special qualities."

A funeral service for Hallie will be held at 10:30 a.m. today at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd Church, 543 Main St., Roosevelt Island.

With Nancy Dillon
and Kathleen Lucadamo

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