Heather Gonet spent 11 years touching the hearts of those who knew her. She was caring and smart and organized. She was joyful and pretty and punctual. Her tragic death this past April left a tremendous void in all who knew her.

“When you think she was only 11 years old, the positive impact she left on everybody is truly amazing,” her grandfather Phil Gonet said.

To help remember her legacy, the Gonet family recently established the **Heather N. Gonet Memorial Scholarship Fund** through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. Heather Gonet passed away from injuries in a car accident.

The scholarship will be given to a student attending Blessed Sacrament Grade School in Springfield. Heather was a fifth grader at Blessed Sacrament this past school year, her first in the school.

“She really thrived there. She had a great time,” Phil Gonet said. “It was a really good year she had at Blessed Sacrament. We thought it would be a nice thing to honor her memory by having a scholarship in her name that would be able to help out families that have kids there.”

The scholarship selection process is still being fine-tuned. It will likely be overseen by representatives from the school. While it is uncertain how many scholarships a year the Fund will provide, the first scholarship is expected to be awarded in the 2007-2008 school year.

Heather’s time at Blessed Sacrament may have been short, but she touched many lives at the school. The school held a ceremony on May 25, placing a stone inscribed with a poem Heather wrote in the garden area.

“I am so very thankful that I was blessed by having Heather as a student, even for just a short time. You raised her to be a delightful, respectful and wonderful young lady! I will greatly miss her.” wrote Melodee Blevins, Heather’s music teacher at Blessed Sacrament, in a letter to the Gonet family.

Heather was an outgoing girl with varied interests, including horses, swimming, gymnastics, soccer, cooking, reading and the arts. She really appreciated the outdoors and loved animals, especially her dog Scout. But it was her ability to connect with all different types of people that stood out.

“She seemed to be able to find the good in everybody,” Phil Gonet said.

And the good in her was easy for others to find.

“Heather was the kind of student a teacher dreams of having. … I will always remember Heather as a bright spot in my teaching career,” wrote Anne McGill, who taught Heather in 3rd grade at Graham Elementary School, in a letter to the family.