

Women's Center To Dedicate Fountain

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

Hope Women's Center will dedicate its courtyard fountain to a young woman who died from cancer two years after giving birth.

Lisa M. Woods will be honored from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at the center, 252 N. Ironwood Drive. The facility will also announce the Lisa Marie Woods Fund for Extraordinary Women, which will be used to assist and support mothers who are making courageous decisions for themselves and their children.

Woods came to Hope Women's Center in September 2006, according to Melissa Sheller, director of development for the center.

"She moved from Michigan to start a new life for herself and her daughter, Alyssa, and for her unborn child, Devonte," Sheller said.

"She was leaving behind a life of abuse, addiction and poverty. She came to Arizona with very little except a desire to be a good mother to her children. She came to the center looking for support, for friendship and for material help."

She began participating in Hope Women's Center's education program and Bible studies, earning all the things that she would need to provide for her newborn baby, Sheller said.

"She was so diligent and eager to learn that she worked through all of the existing curriculum that we had at that time so we created new lessons for her," Sheller said.

In January 2007, a doctor found melanoma on her back and so began a two-year journey that required "much prayer," Sheller said,



Lisa Woods and her family. Devonte was born on January 30, 2007, and Lisa died April 25, 2009. The children, which also includes Alyssa, moved in with their adoptive family in November 2008.

childcare assistance, doctor's appointments, radiation and chemo and adoption planning.

"Many at the center helped to provide for these needs," Sheller said. "Terry, our center director, and I became very personally involved with her children, with providing rides to treatment and in providing care for her while she received chemo and radiation."

"We both learned a lot from this courageous little sister and friend. She made some very difficult decisions—putting the best interest of her children before her own interests. She made the very difficult decision to place her children for adoption, with a wonderful family that she had chosen, before her heart wanted to and before she departed to be with the Lord. She realized that she could not continue receiving treatments and also care for her children in the way that she wanted them to be cared for."

When Lisa met the children's current family, she knew right

away that these were the people that she wanted to place her children with.

"Lisa and the children slowly began to get to know their new adoptive family and in November 2008, Terry, Lisa and I packed the kids and most of their belongings and moved them to their new home," Sheller said.

"It is difficult to adequately describe the courage and confidence this young woman exhibited when she placed her beloved children with another family months before she passed away."

"But as always, she demonstrated a sacrificial love for them. She wanted her children to have a better life than she had experienced. Lisa continued to receive treatments into January 2009, but the cancer continued to grow. Her family came down from Michigan and helped with her care until she entered a hospice facility in April of that year. Lisa went to be with Jesus on April 25, 2009."

The fountain has been a labor of love for the professionals who have been renovating it. Apache Junction resident Ken Bastion, a plumber and facilities maintenance professional, helped renovate it. His daughter is friends with Woods' daughter.

"She asked her dad to do the work and he did," Sheller said. "The whole project was a labor of love with Ken, his daughter Amanda, girlfriend Deborah and even Ken's dad helped him to work on the project."

Donations for the Lisa Marie Woods Fund for Extraordinary Mothers may be sent to Hope Women's Center, P.O. Box 3447, Apache Junction, AZ, 85117.

Garden Railroad Hosts Spring Open House

For the past several years, thousands of area residents have enjoyed Dennis and Dana Busby's Garden Railroad during the Christmas season.

This year, the family is hosting a spring open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 17, and Sunday, April 18, at their home, 7097 E. Cuernavaco Way, Gold Canyon.

The open house is free of charge, however, the Busbys will accept donations for the Make-A-Wish foundation of Arizona.

The "Sunset & Boulder" railroad depicts the narrow gauge railroads that were prevalent in Colorado in the early to mid 1900s. This working display contains more than 500 feet of track, many bridges, trestles and tunnels and features the small town of Boulder. All four trains are operated by handheld remote control. New for this open house is the expansion of the downtown area. New buildings and new track configuration add more interest to the operations of the railroad.

Almost 2,000 visitors toured last year's open house with many coming back several times. Kids of all ages seem to truly enjoy this replication of the magical era of steam railroading.



To get to the open house, take Superstition Mountain Drive from U.S. Highway 60 to Hacienda La Colorada and follow the signs. For more information, call (480) 288-4680.

The Busby's layout is one of 25 layouts in the Valley that

will be open for tours on this same weekend. For information and maps for the tour, visit the Web site at www.eaglewingsironcraft.com, or pick up maps at our location the days of the open house.

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