



Wednesday, September 21, 2011

Healing field flags still available, on display at Bishop Hills

By The Rockford Independent

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Bishop Hills Elder Care Community in Rockford is continuing the tribute to 9/11 victims this week - giving community members one last chance to sponsor a flag and experience the sight.

"We had many people stopping by Cannonsburg after the display was taken down, sad to find they missed the memorial," said Susan Bodenner, owner of Bishop Hills and chairwoman of the West Michigan Healing Field, which took place Sept. 9-13 at the Cannonsburg Ski Area. "But Healing Field is not just a five-day event ... we hope to give every flag a home in a West Michigan business, school or home to forever continue the conversation about the tragedy and hope of Sept. 11 through the eyes of a victim."

Until Friday, 100 of the 3,200 flags will be set up at Bishop Hills. Each flag will be tagged with a victim's name and biography.

Rebecca Dady, second from left, reads the biography on the flag sponsored by the North Rockford Middle School with her classmates.

The flags may be purchased at Bishop Hills, any United Bank location or at www.healingfield.org/west-michigan-2011.

The event itself drew more than 100,000 people throughout the five days. However, just fewer than 2,000 flags were sold during the event.

"When you bring a flag to your home, the conversation becomes even more meaningful and personal," Bodenner said. "It also gives us a platform for sharing the story with our young people that were not born when the attacks happened or were too young to remember them."

The West Michigan Healing Field has the potential to raise more than \$175,000 for local first responder organizations if every flag is purchased.

The cost of sponsoring a flag is \$75.

Lesser known facts about the West Michigan Healing Field

- Of the 3,200 flags on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, 2,997 flags represented the loss of a single person and was tagged with that person's name. The remaining 203 flags represented the victims that were never identified.
- The entry path brought visitors to a center isle, creating a visual break in the flags, each side representing one of the World Trade Center towers.
- The field was laid out in 93 rows in honor of United Airlines flight 93 that crashed in a Pennsylvania field.
- Each flag was 6 feet from the next, so if the victims were alive and standing in the place of their flag, they could hold hands.
- The crest of the hill was at an approximately 1,000-foot incline, the approximate height at which the planes entered the buildings.
- Most of the victims were between 28 and 58 years old, in the prime of their working years. The youngest victim was 2 years old.