

# Children's memorial in S. Tahoe given a new life



The log has names of children from South Lake Tahoe who have died.  
Photos/LTN

***Publisher's note: The children's memorial on Highway 50 and Wildwood Avenue in South Lake Tahoe will be rededicated on Aug. 9 at 6pm. Tahoe Production House is filming the ceremony as part of a documentary that will be available on DVD. The following is from the committee that has spearheaded the replacement of the log that contains the names of children in the area who have died.***

## **When and how was the Children's Memorial founded?**

Driven by the tragic death of her son, Rory, along with his two friends Sandy Haynes and Casey Wells in an automobile accident, Sue Hrbacek-Miller hoped to place, in a public location, the tree that the car struck on the night of Feb. 2, 1991. City Manager Kerry Miller offered a resting place for the tree in its present location. Artist Dan Jones donated the design and work to create the tree that was dedicated on Oct. 2, 1994. When dedicated, the tree had plaques representing 36 lost loved ones. After Sue turned over the memorial to the city of South Lake Tahoe in 2003 it has managed the tree. The

tree currently has 226 plaques, in remembrance of loved ones from 11 states and four foreign countries. The original tree endured 20 seasons of exposure and was no longer able to accomplish its purpose. The new tree will last permanently.

### **Why the new permanent tree and its dedication?**

The Memorial Tree Committee could have replaced the original tree with another wood tree of similar size. However, the committee also recognized that doing so would necessitate again doing a replacement in another 20 years. The ability to repeatedly do that would be doubtful and artist Dan Jones was available now to re-create the tree in a manner consistent with the original. The new tree, re-created with a concrete-polymer material, will be a permanent memorial.



### **What are the goals and plans of the Memorial Tree Committee?**

**Mission:** First, to establish a tree that will be a permanent memorial to the loved ones recognized with plaques on the tree. Further, to establish a permanent Memorial Park that will be an asset for use by residents and visitors to our South Lake Tahoe community.

**Funding:** The permanent Memorial Tree and Memorial Park will be entirely funded by private contributions from individuals and organizations. The funding is overseen by the city of South Lake Tahoe's GIFT (Great Ideas For Tahoe) program. This is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. To date, the committee has been successful in raising the funds to accomplish the tree replacement. The success of the tree replacement effort was heavily dependent on donated and/or at cost discounted labor and materials. The committee expects the Memorial Park part of

the mission to also be accomplished with a large component of donated assistance. The city of South Lake Tahoe will maintain the tree and memorial park when they are completed.



**What is the schedule for completion of the Memorial Park?**

The committee is already working on the necessary permitting for construction in conjunction with the city of South Lake Tahoe to obtain the funds for the new Memorial Park of South Lake Tahoe. The goal is to have sufficient funding in place to begin work on the park in 2014. Complete park construction will be entirely dependent on the combination of funds raised and volunteer commitments of materials and labor for the work to be done.

**How can you help make the Memorial Park a reality?**

**Funding:** Please make contributions in whatever amount you can afford to GIFT Inc., Memorial Park and mail to: 1901 Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Your funds will be in the custody of the city of South Lake Tahoe who will maintain supervision of the program.

**Volunteer Assistance:** Visit the website to understand the work involved in the Memorial Park's construction and establish in what ways you might assist.