

Garden of Joy brightens Mt. Tallac High campus



Garden of Joy at Mount Tallac High School. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

"Who was that?"

"That's one of my kids," Joy Rothschild would say.

Biologically she didn't have any children. But Rothschild had a bond with so many Lake Tahoe Unified students through being an aide in the schools, working to get those who in some manner were homeless to have a more stable life, and through volunteering with Court Appointed Special Advocates that she had many kids in a different way.

There was a special place in her heart for youngsters who didn't fit into society's definition of "normal teen".

She regularly gave money for a scholarship to Mount Tallac High so students could continue their education.

Rothschild died in August 2012 at the age of 63. But her memory lives on and the work she did continues.

Today there is spot in the back of the Tallac campus in South Lake Tahoe called Garden of Joy. A bench was donated last year through the classified union and friends, with the mural being painted at the start of this school year. Pavers donated by Tahoe Paving Stones and laid by students under the direction of teacher Jackie Tan give it a more complete look.

In the stones is an 11-foot-by-11-foot chessboard. Tan plans to write a grant so by spring there would be large game pieces students could use to play chess.

Oct. 22 was Mount Tallac's annual open house, with students giving tours of the campus. The garden is one of the stops along the way.

"Joy just loved the Tallac school. She was very loved by students who liked the alternative programs. She loved them," Karen Tinlin, principal of Mount Tallac, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Teri Rothschild believes her sister would be thrilled with the tribute. She and their father, Rocky, donated to the cause.

"I like having something up there that is permanent," Rothschild said.

Rothschild and artist Matt Kauffmann met only once – and it was rather random. He works with the Sphere of Influence program that has kids paint electric boxes in the area. They are the type of youth Rothschild connected with and always helped. Kauffmann was on Ski Run Boulevard with some youths when a vehicle pulls up and out pops Rothschild saying, "I love what you are doing" – gives him a hug and gets back in the car.

Kauffmann spent a day creating the mural. A large sunflower represents Rothschild's favorite flower. Aspens frame the artwork.

"I wanted to make it bright, alive and fun," Kauffmann told *Lake Tahoe News*.