

NEWS

from

LONDONWOOD GARDENS

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LONDONWOOD, SCOUTS BUILD NEW PATHWAY FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Patients at the Grove Nursing Center on Har-Ber Road soon will have their own easy-access entrance to the adjacent Lendonwood Gardens, thanks to the perseverance of two Grove Boy Scouts, some local businesses and Lendonwood volunteers.

Working together, the various groups have built a new handicap-accessible pathway from the nursing center, located just west of Lendonwood, into the eight-acre botanical garden. Besides the pathway, a picnic gazebo near the Angel of Hope Statue Garden has been improved to serve as a rest-station along the way.

“We are delighted to provide this opportunity for our neighbors at the Grove Nursing Center,” said Roger Endo, president of the Lendonwood Board of Directors. “We could not have done it without the leadership of Boys Scouts Ian Patrick and Dalton Henderson, who came to us seeking ideas for a project to help complete requirements for their Eagle Scout badge.”

Endo said that initial contact came about two years ago, just as he was thinking about how to make Lendonwood more accessible to the neighboring nursing center.

“When my own mother was in a nursing home, she enjoyed being taken in her wheelchair along a river walk for some fresh air,” Endo said. “Considering Lendonwood’s close proximity to the Grove Nursing Center, my wife and I thought there should be something we could do to benefit the residents there.”

In the past, nursing home residents have had to be transported by car around to the front entrance before entering the garden. Soon, after the final touches are complete, they can enter directly from the nursing facility’s property through a wooded area on the garden’s west side.

Grove Nursing Center administrator Betty Vanderpool said, “This new pathway will be a wonderful asset to our seniors here. Some of our visitors have seen the work in progress and expressed their appreciation.”

"I just want to thank the donors, the Gardens and the Scouts for all they did to make this possible," Vanderpool said. "We look forward to helping our seniors enjoy the garden next door."

Scout Dalton Henderson, a senior at Grove High School, organized the construction of the new pathway, which provides a solid base with borders and packing chat to ensure wheelchairs will be able to travel with ease to the garden. Discounted or free materials were provided by the Grove Lowes store and Longan Construction. Financial contributions were made by the Masonic Lodge and Lendonwood Gardens.

"I was so amazed with the support we received for this project," said Henderson. "The discount from Lowes helped tremendously and Longan Construction delivered an entire truck-load of chat, free of charge."

Endo said the pathway project also included making improvements to the garden's Picnic Gazebo. Located in an out-of-the-way corner of the garden's west side, the gazebo had not received much attention in past years.

Now, the structure's roof has new shingles and there are new benches for seating. A screen skirt has been built around the gazebo foundation. These improvements were managed by Boy Scout Ian Patrick.

"This project gives Dalton and me so much pride," said Patrick. "I have gone to Lendonwood many times to earn service merit badges and I thought it would be great to give back to the garden and the community as part of my pursuit of Eagle Scout."

"Boy Scouts are held to a high standard of expectation, but Eagle Scouts even more so. We expect Eagle Scouts to soar like an eagle," Patrick said. "So when we learned about the need for a pathway and refurbished gazebo, it was just a natural fit." The Grove senior student also credited Scout leader Todd Deakins for providing moral support throughout their work.

After entering Lendonwood along the new pathway, nursing home residents will be able to pause at the newly renovated gazebo for a rest or a picnic lunch as they proceed further into the garden.

The final steps in the project will be handled by the nursing center, which will include cutting a curb and building a ramp to connect to the Lendonwood pathway.

"Scouts Ian and Dalton have really managed this entire project," Endo said. "They organized the work, recruited other Scouts to help, obtained discounts for materials, and sought monetary donations. This was a very labor-intensive project and they handled it exceptionally well." He said the two young men often assisted each other in completing their individual portions of the project.

Members of the Lendonwood Board of Directors also helped out on the project, including Endo, Jim Reynolds and Dave Torline.

"From my perspective, I hope this project will encourage friends and relatives of those requiring specialized care to spend more quality time with them outdoors," Endo said. "Perhaps, if people realize just how accessible Lendonwood is, they will take full advantage of this local treasure."

Lendonwood Gardens is a botanical garden supported by volunteers, memberships and contributions. The garden is open to the public year-round, from dawn to dusk. Botanical highlights include major collections of azaleas, rhododendrons, daylilies, hostas, peonies, Japanese maples, dogwoods, and many other plants and trees.

Lendonwood also has become a popular site for weddings, prom and graduation photos and other special events. In addition, the garden is home to the Angel of Hope statue, which serves as a memorial to lost loved ones, especially children.

For more information about Lendonwood, see the garden's web site at www.lendonwood.com, or call 918-786-2938.