

Hearts Haven Memorial Park Opened

Story and Photos by Linda Harrington

Two families linked by one of this community's most horrific days April 19, 2020 came together to design a memorial project to remember and honour their loved ones. The area along Plains Road, Debert where life was tragically stolen from Kristen Beaton, a VON health-care worker pregnant with her second child, and Heather O'Brien, a VON nurse is now a beautiful 16-acre memorial tribute with flowers, walking trails, playground, picnic area and most of all a place to heal and enjoy

this peaceful space. Hearts Haven Memorial Park was officially opened to the public on July 23rd, 2023.

Darcy Dobson, daughter of Heather O'Brien offered heartfelt words of appreciation to her father Teddy O'Brien and to Nick Beaton. She thanked the Colchester County Parks and Recreation Department for all they did for the last two years and all the work that had been put into the Park, including the number of extra hours that went into making it perfect for the opening. Darcy noted there is still more to come, it is a work in progress.

She wanted to send a special thank you to the community, noting there were too many to list right now, but recognizes so many who donated to make this park a reality. There will be a permanent way to recognize those people in the park eventually. "Without this community we wouldn't have this," says Darcy adding, "Today is about giving

back to a community that has given us something so beautiful after a tragedy."

A special presentation was made to Colchester Councillor Marie-Irving Benoit. "Marie Irving-Benoit is the reason we are standing here today. She listened to us a lot of late nights. She put everything she had into this place and I would like to thank her in front of you because she deserves that recognition," said Darcy before an emotional presentation of flowers to Marie.

Nick Beaton, husband of Kristen Beaton also added his appreciation to those "near, far and beyond, people not even from Canada who have reached out" and he thanked everyone who has made the park happen. He also thanked Marie Irving-Benoit who he says, "took their wants and wishes and wouldn't take no for an answer and made sure everything is what we wanted it to be." He was appreciative to Colchester County Parks and Recreation for their "labour of love" and the time they put into making sure everything was right. He added a special thank-you to his mother Bev for helping make Kristen's sight so special and to all those, including family



Nick Beaton and his son Dax thank the community and everyone else for their support to help get the Memorial Park completed.



Beautiful benches donated by Colin Gero allow for walkers to take a few moments to rest along the peaceful trails.



Colchester Signs & Promo was one of the many local firms who participated in the development of Hearts Haven Playground Park. Shown above is one of the many signs located throughout the 16 acre facility in Debert. (Submitted)



Sunshine Paul-Martin does a Smudging Ceremony and a Tobacco Offering for Heather O'Brien and Kristen Beaton.



Darcy Dobson welcomes everyone to the opening of Heart's Haven Memorial Park and offers words of appreciation to those who helped make this happen.



Dax Beaton puts a lovely pad lock on the bridge in memory of his mother Kristen, as his dad Nick and grandmother Bev look on.

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One of the many signs located throughout Hearts Haven.

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