

# New garden reflects community efforts

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by Rita Manno

for The Central Record

**MEDFORD**—It was a chilly late afternoon, but it didn't matter at least for a few minutes as people reflected on the unselfish efforts by volunteers to plan and develop the Memorial Bench Reflection Garden in Freedom Park. The four benches facing each other and surrounded by pink roses were dedicated in a brief ceremony on Oct. 9.

all-day torrent of rain, Medford residents pooled their resources and labor to create the garden. Medford Works and the Woman's Club of Medford coordinated the effort. It is now a place to rest and reflect.

Since then, the garden has become even more beautiful. The centerpiece is a red maple that was planted to replace a stately sycamore tree that was downed in a storm.



CR photo by David Borrelli  
**MEDFORD MAYOR Randy Pace speaks at the October dedication of the Memorial Bench Reflection Garden in Freedom Park.**

On Earth Day last spring, in an

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## Garden

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"Truly all the civic organizations we have are doing something great daily in the township," said Mayor James "Randy" Pace. Specifically, he praised the Woman's Club for all their efforts in building the garden.

Kathy Cullen, president of the Woman's Club, told the group their presence that afternoon showed their dedication to the community. Many of its members offered their skills in mulching and planting the flowers. The garden is

located on the circular drive in front of the skate park.

The memorial benches were donated by South Jersey Industries ("Women's Leadership Initiative"), the Woman's Club of Medford ("Be the One Who Dares to Dream"), Thomas Knapp ("In Loving Memory of Anne Knapp") and Erik's Family ("For Erik and all children who transform our lives"). Erik was the son of Janet Giardina, who heads Medford Works. Born with multiple health challenges, Erik died of leukemia before his first birthday.

Volunteer efforts, donation of materials and finan-

cial contributions from JL Landscaping, Jersey Pools & Spas, L & L Redi Mix Inc., Medford Township Clean Communities grant program, the Daniel Berenberg Family and The Homers, a group of retired men in Medford, also made the garden possible.

Joe Johnston, who opened Harvest Coffee Shop on Bank Street near Main Street recently, served freshly brewed coffee and pastries to the grateful group. After brief remarks and the Pledge of Allegiance, Matthew Boyd of Shawnee High School sang a heartfelt rendition of "The Rose."