

# Devoted friends lay Hope to rest

Northwoods workers pay for girl's funeral, burial

By **PAUL GRONDAHL**  
Staff writer

**NISKAYUNA** — Three weeks after her death, Hope Ann Genoski, who was born prematurely and passed away at age 9 because of lung complications, continues to touch people's lives.

**Video**  
View a video about Hope Ann Genowski's short life at <http://timesunion.com>.

The vibrant, spirited girl who spent most of her life at Northwoods at Hilltop rehabilitation facility was buried July 2 at Holy Redeemer Cemetery in Niskayuna.

"Nobody wanted our beloved Hope buried in a pauper's grave in Ulster County," said Michelle Durling, nurse manager of the pediatric unit at Northwoods.

That county's social service agency became her legal guardian after her parents, who moved there, could not care for her. Meanwhile, the fees for the girl's burial arrangements totaled \$8,000, and there was no account to cover the costs.

The Northwoods staff sold strawberry shortcake and organized other fundraisers. Checks began arriving from former staff members and strangers around the region and out of state, touched by stories of the girl's courage and grace under the strain of chronic health problems.

"Some really generous people have come through," Durling said.

She and her colleague, Laurel Gugliuzza, who took Genoski home to live with her family in Johnstown as the girl's foster family, took charge of fundraising.



**HOPE ANN GENOSKI**

## How to help

A Hope Ann Genoski Memorial Fund has been set up, and additional money collected will be used to pay for special trips and activities for children at the Northwoods at Hilltop rehabilitation facility.

Checks can be sent to the Hope Ann Genoski Memorial Fund c/o Northwoods at Hilltop, 1805 Providence Ave., Niskayuna, NY 12309.

About \$3,000 was collected.

But that left a gap of \$5,000.

In stepped Northwoods administrators, who agreed to cover the remaining balance.

"Hope was part of our family here and that's what you do for family. It was the right thing to do," said Lisa Cupolo, a Northwoods spokeswoman.

"Hope was so special and made such an impact on me. She was an inspiration," said Natasha Theofandis of Houston, who made a \$500 contribution.

She met the girl briefly once while visiting her sisters, both of whom worked at Northwoods.

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