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Rainbow Bridge Pet Memorial at Tonaquint Nature Center offers tribute to beloved family pets no longer with us

Ribbon cutting ceremony will mark the bridge's unveiling, Nov. 17 at 10 a.m.

ST. GEORGE — A new and unique memorial spot specifically designed to honor beloved deceased pets will serve as a place of remembrance and connectivity in St. George.

The Tonaquint Nature Center Rainbow Bridge, a heartwarming tribute created to honor pets that have passed on, will have a ribbon cutting ceremony and unveiling to mark the bridge's opening, November 17 at 10 a.m. All are invited to attend and encouraged to bring a deceased pet's collar to affix to the bridge.

"My hope is that residents and visitors alike will be inclined to leave a memento from a pet who has passed on," Mugavero said. "I truly believe that all pets go to heaven and as we cross over our own rainbow bridge, they will come racing to meet us once again."

Inspired by the famous rainbow bridge poem, St. George resident Amy Mugavero proposed the idea to the City in early 2023, and the creation of the project began in the summer. Mugavero knows what it feels like to endure that grief, as she has lost several dachshunds over the years. She describes the feeling as "your heart being ripped out of your chest."

Written by Edna Clyne-Rekhy in 1959 when she lost her golden retriever, the Rainbow Bridge poem has become the most widespread gesture of comfort for when a pet dies. It focuses on the future and hope of seeing your pet again while mourning the loss of their physical presence.

“The rainbow bridge is a great addition to the community because it gives those who have lost their beloved pets a place to remember and honor them,” said Sara Roundy, Recreation Supervisor at the City of St. George. “There is not another place like this in the St. George area.”

The bridge, already in existence, is located east of the duck pond at the Nature Center inside Tonaquint Park. It has been cleaned, repaired and painted.

“The bridge is just another way to be aware of those around us and show kindness,” Roundy said. “If people or families have not lost a pet, they are still welcome to come to the bridge, interact with others there and walk across it.”

Members of the community planning to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony are encouraged to bring a pet collar that can be attached to the bridge in honor of their deceased pet.

“I have embroidered the names of my dogs on collars and plan on leaving them at the ribbon cutting,” Mugavero said.

Those planning to attend are encouraged to park in the northernmost parking lot of Tonaquint Park, near the tennis courts. There will be direct access to the trail leading to the bridge from that parking lot.

About the City of St. George

St. George is the largest city in Washington County and the fifth-largest city in Utah with approximately 100,000 residents. In recent years, people from across the United States and Canada have been attracted to St. George’s world class healthcare, active lifestyle, access to university education and proximity to unrivaled recreation. Scenic beauty abounds throughout the city and region including Snow Canyon State Park, Quail Creek and Sand Hollow Reservoirs, and Zion National Park. With an average of about 300 days of sunshine per year, the community welcomes all to live, work, play and eat and experience “The Brighter Side” in St. George, Utah.

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