



Angel of Hope

The Angel of Hope is a non-denominational shrine and memorial walkway set aside as a place for people who have lost a loved one to come, grieve, and seek consolation; to focus, not on a grave, but on a life, however brief or long. You are invited to visit, pause, and reflect in the presence of an Angel.

Our Angel of Hope, surrounded by white carnations (donated by Broadway Gardens), as placed by those in attendance at the dedication.

Our Angel of Hope is inspired by Richard Paul Evans' story "The Christmas Box", reprinted in Reader's Digest in January 2000. It tells of a father who comes to appreciate the gift of his own family, after meeting an elderly lady whose only child died young, but was never forgotten, and always deeply loved. The story features an angel statue that was an invention of the author.

The magic of the story is that it prompted people to ask, "Where is this Angel statue? I want to visit it". As a result, the imaginary Angel was made into a real statue, giving hundreds of people a focus for their grief, and a first step towards healing. Now Angel statues – mostly bronze ones – have been erected at sites all over the country. More information on the "Christmas Box Angel" movement is available online at <http://caseproof.com/rpe/angels.php>

"This is really proving to be a community effort, which is just what we had hoped for", said Committee Chairman David Brennan during the fund-raising phase of the project. The Knights of Columbus were inspired with the idea for this project, set the wheels in motion, and were very involved throughout. Bricks for the walkway were donated by LaChance Brick, and the walkway installation was a gift of Doria Masonry.

Our Angel of Hope was dedicated August 11, 2002. The brick walkway leads to a circle where the angel waits with welcoming arms. The walkway is lined with granite memorial markers, and memorial benches are set around the circle.

From the dedication ceremony:

We were excited about this project from the beginning, and wanted to be a part of it, because the Angel of Hope is the perfect extension of our usual roles as a cemetery, and the perfect vehicle for community outreach: all are welcome here. And: hope exists. Hope of someday being reunited with those who were taken from us too soon. Hope of a better tomorrow. And what we've found during the course of this project is that people in the community at large have taken this concept, of the Angel of Hope, and—flown with it. Our Angel has become the embodiment of whatever purpose is special to each of THEM-- whether that purpose is the loss of a little one; or the loss of a grown-up child; or empathy with those who have been there; or the loss of somebody else altogether, somebody—anybody-- who needs an Angel."

It is our hope and wish that people of all faiths, even those who lack any religious background, will feel welcome to visit the Angel. She is located on Calvary Cemetery land, but she herself is completely non-denominational. Our Angel recognizes that grief is not only acceptable; it is necessary. Friends mean well when they advise us to "get on with your life"; we know that part of that means leaving a space for grieving.

Directions:

From I-95, exit to I-295 N. Immediately exit to Broadway. Turn right on Broadway. Go through the light at Western Ave, staying on Broadway. * After about ½ mile, the road curves to the left just before the cemetery entrance (opposite Jamestown Court). Enter the cemetery and follow the paved road around to your left. As you come around the back of the central oval, the Angel of Hope is in front of you.

From I-295 S, exit to Western Ave; turn left onto Western Ave; go under the highway, & turn left again at the next light, onto Broadway. Then as above from *.