

Welcome home



Judith Hupperts, a Woodlawn resident injured in a motor vehicle accident in Oklahoma on Oct. 12, was flown back to Jefferson County with the help of Wings of Hope, a St. Louis-based organization that is focused on bringing health care to impoverished people. She raised her hands in greeting after personnel from White Oak Rehabilitation and Health Care Center shouted, "Welcome home, Judith!"

RORYE O'CONNOR/REGISTER-NEWS

Local woman returns after accident

By RORYE O'CONNOR

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WOODLAWN — Judith Hupperts, 72, had a happy homecoming after a serious car accident, thanks to Wings of Hope.

Hupperts has been in an Oklahoma hospital since Oct. 12, after a drunk driver in Talequah, Okla., hit the vehicle with her and her sister, Carolyn Hupperts, while they were vacationing. The collision left Carolyn with a broken sternum, and Judith with a broken neck and a leg broken in 17 different places, Carolyn said.

Judith had been away from home since Sept. 22.

Wings of Hope a St. Louis-based non-profit organization, uses aircraft to bring medical care to impoverished people, or in this case, brings people to the medical care

they need.

A Piper Navajo twin-engine aircraft left from Richard Lloyd Jones Jr. Airport, located five miles south of Tulsa, Okla., and traveled directly to the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, where emergency transport vehicles were standing by.

Retired commercial pilots Chuck Midyett, of Springfield, and Bob Ritchey, of St. Louis, flew the Piper Navajo from Tulsa to Mt. Vernon, said fellow pilot Jerry Spear of Centralia. Also donating time to make the flight possible was Debbie Paulin.

Judith was moved from the aircraft right into an ambulance from Litton Ambulance Service, and driven to White Oak Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. She will take part in the facility's Pathways to Home rehabilitation program, said Allison Clark,

community resource coordinator for White Oak Rehabilitation and Health Care Center.

Personnel from White Oak Rehab shouted, "Welcome home, Judith!" when she was taken off the plane, and she waved her hands to the people gathered.

"She's just now starting to be able to walk," said Sister Carolyn, who is a Catholic nun in the St. Louis area.

Marsha McKinney, administrator at White Oak Rehabilitation, said this is the first time the facility has worked with Wings of Hope.

Clark said she was touched by the number of people donating their time and resources to make it possible for Judith to come home.

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"It's a godly thing," she said.

Judith, a Woodlawn resident, owns a dog kennel where she raises Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Clark said. She also is a judge for dog shows and guinea pig shows.



Sentinel Photo/ANDREW MILLER

Joyous return home

Litton's Ambulance employees and a Wings of Hope volunteer help Judith Hupperts, as she reacts to a greeting of "Welcome home, Judith" from those in attendance of her arrival, off a Navajo Piper twin engine airplane Saturday afternoon at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Hupperts, from Woodlawn, was involved in a car accident on Oct. 12 in Oklahoma and finally returned Saturday to Southern Illinois for the first time since Sept. 22, when she and her sister Sister Carolyn Hupperts, RIGHT, left on vacation. Hupperts will rehab at White Oaks Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Mt. Vernon.

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