

## Mercy holds celebration for new helipad



Lisa Jarrett credits an emergency airlift four years ago with saving her daughter Anna's right arm when the teen was injured in a car accident.

"Seconds count ... It was pretty amazing how quickly they made it happen and a lot of it is the reason why she has her arm," the Roseburg resident said. "She was able to be life-lifted to a trauma hospital so quickly."

Anna Jarrett, 19, spent three months at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland after she was transported there from Mercy Medical Center. The Legacy Emanuel doctors not only saved her life, they also reattached the arm that was nearly severed at the shoulder.

"I'm very thankful," Anna Jarrett said.

Gratitude was one reason she and her family attended a celebration Tuesday evening at Mercy Medical Center for the hospital's new helicopter pad, which opened two months ago. Jarrett said she wanted to show why it is so important to have a such a service available at the hospital.

"It's fantastic for our patients and the quality of their care if indeed they need to be airlifted out of Roseburg," said Kelly Morgan, chief executive officer of Mercy Medical Center. The new helipad replaces one that was removed when the Oregon Surgery Center was built 10 years ago.

On hand Tuesday to make demonstration flights was Ed Langerveld, owner and chief pilot of Emergency Airlift, which provides airlifting services to Mercy along with hospitals in North Bend, Klamath Falls and Reno, Nev. Having a landing spot for helicopters on the hospital site saves crucial time when attempting to quickly connect patients like Anna Jarrett to lifesaving medical treatment, he said. Emergency Airlift staff members are always ready to rush into action when needed from their local headquarters at the Roseburg Regional Airport, he said.

"When we get a call we have two or three minutes to scramble and then it's 30 seconds to get to the pad," he said. "We're in the ICU in a matter of minutes."

When Langerveld demonstrated the capabilities of Emergency Airlift's medical helicopter on Tuesday, it did indeed only take mere seconds for him to travel from the helipad to the nearby airport. The helicopter can reach a top speed of 138 mph.

During a medical emergency, an emergency nurse and medic are on hand to assist the patient. All are crammed with the pilot into the tight hull of the chopper, Langerveld said. Emergency Airlift has already done 50 helicopter airlifts from the new pad, situated near the emergency room, since it was completed two months ago, he said.

Without the landing pad, the hospital had to transport even the most critical patients by ambulance to the airport to be airlifted by Emergency Airlift to another hospital, said Mercy spokeswoman Kathleen Nickel. The patient having to make two trips, one by ambulance and another by plane, instead of just one by helicopter presents certain risks, she said.

"Every time you move a patient there's potential for equipment to come unhooked," she said. "It's better for the patient and ultimately better patient care."

This was one reason why doctors such as Chuck McCart, an emergency department physician, were adamant about the old helipad finally being replaced, she said.

The nonprofit Mercy Foundation was happy to help out with this cause, which cumulated in the celebration for helicopter pad's completion on Tuesday, said Gary Wayman, chairman of the foundation.

"Now (patients) can get a helicopter ride to the airport saving a lot of time, which could be life or death," he said.