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CIRCLE OF HONOR



Nancy Snyder/METRONORTH NEWS

Buckley Air Force Base Honor Guard Senior Airman **Scott Chambers**, Staff Sgt. **Kimberly Black**, Staff Sgt. **Andrew Downey** and Senior Airman **Denver Stack** raise the flag at A Child's Touch in Thornton May 27. The Honor Guard helped the preschool celebrate Memorial Day and the dedication of its Circle of Honor, a monument of stones inscribed with the Ten Commandments, Pledge of Allegiance and names of all major wars. See story on Page 7A.

Commandments, pledge set in stone

By Nancy Snyder
Sentinel Editor

In a time when the Pledge of Allegiance is being thrown out of schools and the Ten Commandments taken out of government and court offices, a preschool in Thornton has permanently inscribed them on stones larger than their students.

The four-foot tall inscribed flagstones mark the entrance to the Circle of Honor, which features a six-foot flagstone inscribed with the names of all major wars and conflicts on either side of a granite plaque dedicated to the country.

"We just wanted a place to honor God and country," said A Child's Touch owner Mike Grillo. "On days like Memorial Day and the 4th of July it is a place kids can come out to understand why we have those days."

Christian education and patriotism are instilled in students on a daily basis at the school where even 1-year-olds are taught to recite the pledge every morning.

"If it's instilled when they are little, it will become part of them," Grillo's wife Debi said.

The idea for the Circle of Honor began developing about five years ago, and has transformed and grown each year. First, it was just a flagpole. Then item by item it grew.

After the two-ton center stone was lowered into place by a crane last week, it was time to dedicate the circle.

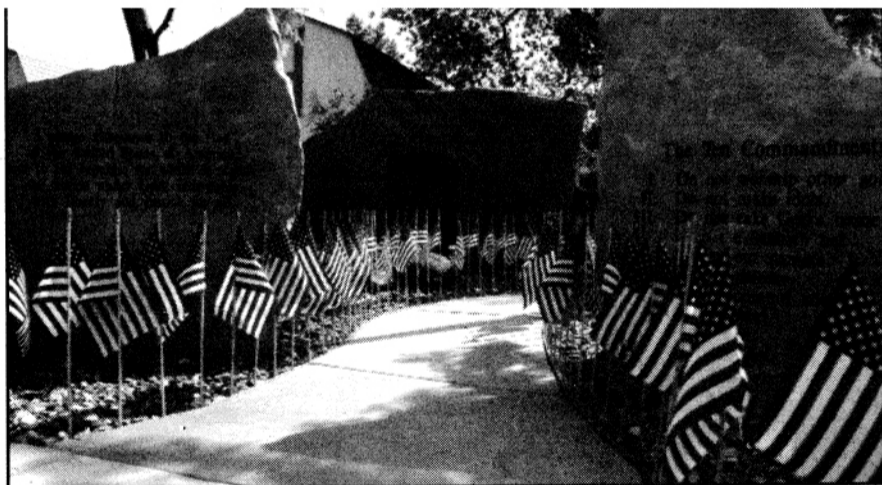
Dozens of four, five and six-year-olds lined the school's sidewalks with 225 small American flags on May 27. Two and three-year-olds hooked their fingers through the toddler playground fence and smashed their noses up close to see the goings on. Flags surrounded the circle. Flags lined the flower bed.

The Buckley Air Force Base Honor Guard marched along the student-lined sidewalks to the flagpole, where they raised and saluted the flag. The Pledge was recited and songs were sung.

Then more flags were planted along the sidewalk and parents showed up for tours and a barbecue.

"Mike's always had the idea he wanted to do this," Debi said.

"It's just a way to honor God and country," Mike said.



THE CIRCLE OF HONOR at A Child's Touch in Thornton includes two 900-pound slabs of flagstone inscribed with the Pledge of Allegiance and Ten Commandments, and a 4,000-pound slab inscribed with all the major wars. A water feature in the circle allows children to put their hands in a constant flow of water.

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