

# NEWS RELEASE

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**WHISPERING HOPE RANCH FOUNDATION**  
**RECEIVES \$350,000.00 GRANT FOR NEW CAMP AMENITIES**  
**AND SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

SCOTTSDALE (January 11, 2012) –**Whispering Hope Ranch Foundation (WHRF)**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing healing, life-changing camp and retreat experiences for a diverse population of children facing life-altering or limiting illnesses, physical, emotional or developmental challenges, recently received a **\$350,000** grant from the **Agnes Varis Charitable Trust**.

The \$350,000.00 grant will establish **The Agnes Varis Center for Interaction, Hope & Healing** at Whispering Hope Ranch, a camp and retreat facility east of Payson, Ariz., for special needs children. **The Agnes Varis Center for Interaction, Hope & Healing** will consist of a new **Center for Human-Animal Interaction**, the **Jazz-n-Jets Splash Zone**, and the **Hope and Healing Fund**, all appropriately named to honor the memory of Dr. Agnes Varis.

The **Agnes Varis Center for Human-Animal Interaction** will be strategically located and designed to be fully accessible for the most severely challenged. This addition will allow children with mobility issues to benefit from specialized programs that focus on building strong human-animal interactions. Animals previously out of reach will offer comfort to each camper, regardless of their challenges.

At **The Agnes Varis Jazz-n-Jets Splash Zone**, all campers, including those with body temperature regulation, will enjoy cooling down while listening to jazz tunes and taking in the stunning beauty of the surrounding natural landscape. Elements of the fully accessible splash pad will include multi-directional spray jets, bubblers, shade structures, and a sound system to play the various jazz musicians that were enjoyed by Dr. Varis.

The third component of The Agnes Varis Center for Interaction, Hope & Healing is **The Agnes Varis Hope & Healing Fund**, inspired by other philanthropic programs and funds initiated by Dr. Varis. **The Agnes Varis Hope & Healing Fund** will help ensure that finances are not a barrier to children with special needs in need of the Whispering Hope Ranch experience.

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“We are grateful to be the recipient of this generous gift that will honor the memory of Dr. Varis, and bring comfort to those in need in our community,” said Robert Mayfield, board member of WHRF. “It’s a direct investment in improving the quality of life for children who are coping with challenges, for their families, and for the animals who call the Ranch home.”

**Whispering Hope Ranch Foundation’s** mission is to offer special needs children and their families rustic, Arizona ranch-style camp and retreat experiences enhanced by programs designed to foster nurturing interactions between campers and the animals residing at the ranch. For more information about WHRF, call (602) 266-2216 or visit [www.whisperinghoperanch.org](http://www.whisperinghoperanch.org).

**The Agnes Varis Charitable Trust** was established through the philanthropy of Dr. Agnes Varis (1930-2011). A legendary business leader, Dr. Varis started her first company, Agvar Chemicals, in 1975. She subsequently co-founded Marsam Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Aegis Pharmaceuticals. Dr. Varis was devoted to supporting organizations committed to the underprivileged, education, the arts, and the welfare of animals, believing that doing so uplifts both the individual and the community.

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