

A Brand-New Adaptive Playground and Sensory Garden Opens in Rye Brook

The facility will benefit both children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, and other disabilities.

BY NICK BRANDI *Published: 09/03/2019*



The new Harmony Park in Rye Brook is dedicated to helping local adults and children with special needs. The facility offers many attractions, including a waterplay table, wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round and glider.

PHOTO BY WARREN ROSENBERG/COURTESY OF CPW

In June, Cerebral Palsy of Westchester (CPW) opened Harmony Park, a new adaptive playground and sensory garden at the David G. Osterer Center on King St in Rye Brook, to benefit both children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, and other disabilities.

The facility represents the first-of-its-kind in the region, offering innovative, wheelchair-accessible equipment and sensory activities, so individuals with mobility issues can swing, play, experience nature,

and practice critical skills. The park enables CPW participants to play as typical children do, improving health and functioning, reducing stress, and granting them and their families a new sense of well-being.

According to CPW executive director Linda Kuck, “Outdoor play helps develop physical and social skills and build confidence. However, disabled children have very few play opportunities. Research reports that children with disabilities exercise four and a half times less than children without disabilities, largely because they lack adaptive sports-and-recreation programs and equipment.”

The playground includes a wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round and glider, waterplay table, Pulse Tempo interactive music and sensory game installation, xylophone, giant bongos, umbrella pavilion area, outdoor musical and raised planter beds with colorful flowers, aromatic herbs and plants that sway or whistle — all designed to encourage physical activity, stimulate the senses, and promote imaginative, interactive play that helps children build social and problem-solving skills, as well as frustration tolerance.

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Now in its 70th year of community service, CPW and its 450-person staff provide essential services and programs for children and adults in Westchester and Fairfield Counties with developmental disabilities that range from autism and neurological impairments to intellectual disabilities, epilepsy and of course cerebral palsy.

<http://www.westchestermagazine.com/Westchester-Magazine/September-2019/Rye-Brook-Adaptive-Playground-Sensory-Garden/>