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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CPW's BRIDGE School at Rye Brook to Host Little Free Library Dedication Ceremony

May 18, 2021 at 1 pm at Pine Ridge Park in Rye Brook, NY

RYE BROOK, NY – The Village of Rye Brook and The BRIDGE School at Cerebral Palsy Center of Westchester (CPW) will host the grand opening of a Little Free Library in Pine Ridge Park, Mohegan Lane in Rye Brook, on Tuesday, May 18 at 1pm. Children's book author **Leslie Kimmelman** will be joining **Rye Brook Mayor Paul Rosenberg**, BRIDGE School students and staff, park staff, friends, and families at the ceremony. The event is open to the public; masks and social distancing will be in effect. CPW is encouraging attendees to bring a book to donate to the library.



Left photo: Elijah Roberts (in blue) at Pine Ridge Park last year with his project team: (L-R) Village of Rye Brook General Foreman Paul Vinci, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Robert Bertolacci, Scout Master Jay Singer of the Mid-Westchester Elks, and Rye Brook Administrator Christopher Bradbury. Right photo: Finished Library ready to be installed! With BRIDGE School Principal Barry Wasser and Rye Brook crew.

For several years, the Village has had a goal of putting a Little Free Library in this park. So, when CPW approached Rye Brook's Administrator Chris Bradbury about a high-school student at CPW's BRIDGE School wanting to build a Little Free Library as part of his Senior Project back in 2019, the village became excited about this partnership. The student, **Elijah Roberts**, now a graduate of The BRIDGE School and currently attending a college program, hoped the library would be a place where children and adults could read and borrow books, with the goal of encouraging community members to share their love of reading with one another.

Rye Brook Mayor Paul Rosenberg remarks, *"We believe that putting a Little Free Library near the playground in this park is ideal as parents can read a book while the children are playing, kids can read a book to relax, and/or parents can read with their kids in the park. It will be available to anyone of all ages who visits this active park."*

To jump-start the project, **The Mid Westchester Elks Lodge #535**, sponsor of CPW's Adaptive Boy Scout

Troop 535 which Elijah was a member of for many years, donated a seed-grant towards his idea. Additional funds were raised by local residents through a Go-Fund-Me. After a few COVID-related delays, and with the guidance of BRIDGE School Social Worker Maria Savino, help from Elijah's mentor and Scout Leader Jay Singer of The Mid Westchester Elks, and the support of Rye Brook administration, the library has now been completed!

For those not familiar with the program, **Little Free Library** is a nonprofit agency that *"builds community, inspires readers, and expands book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led little libraries. Through Little Free Library book exchanges, millions of books are exchanged each year, profoundly increasing access to books for readers of all ages and backgrounds."* It is a fantastic, free, book exchange program in a small library "box" placed on a post that can include opportunities to *"take a book-leave a book"* for both youth and adults.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO BRING A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY TO A PARK! Read on for more about the organizational partners who came together to bring this project to fruition.

Pine Ridge Park, located off Mohegan Lane, is a **Rye Brook** public park that includes two Little League fields, four tennis courts, two and a half basketball courts and a playground. Rye Brook Parks and Recreation operates many programs and special events at the park throughout the year.

Leslie Kimmelman lives in Westchester and is the author of well over 50 books for children, both fiction and nonfiction. She was also a children's book editor and worked for the last 24 years as an editor and writer at Sesame Workshop. *"I still read everything I can get my hands on,"* she states, *"and write stories and poems that, I hope, help introduce children to the magic of books."*

The Mid-Westchester Elks Lodge #535 was organized in 2009 and meets at the American Legion Post No. 1097 in Armonk, NY. For over a decade, Lodge #535 has adopted CPW as their major community project. This includes playing a formative and leadership role in CPW's Adaptive Scouts: Cub Scout Pack 535 and Girl Scout Troop 1902. Since 1966, the NYS Elks have embraced the Cerebral Palsy Associations of NYS as their Major Project. Throughout the world, Elks' lodges promote neighbors coming together, families sharing meals, and helping children grow.

The BRIDGE School at Rye Brook, a division of Cerebral Palsy of Westchester, is a special education center serving students with multiple disabilities. It offers a comprehensive program that connects families, students, and educational professionals to help each student reach their academic potential and discover what the possibilities are for them beyond the school setting.

Cerebral Palsy of Westchester. With a main campus located in Rye Brook and now in its 72nd year, CPW's mission is to advance the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with all developmental disabilities including autism, neurological impairments, intellectual disabilities, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy. Through a comprehensive network of educational programs, day services, residential sites, therapeutic services, employment training, recreation programs and advocacy, the agency helps thousands of children and adults in Westchester and Fairfield Counties live more productive and satisfying lives. The organization's motto is: *Realizing Tomorrow's Potential . . . Today!*

For **high resolution photos** and more information, contact Tia Levinson, CPW's Director of Development and Public Relations, at 914-937-3800 ext. 353 or email tia.levinson@cpwestchester.org.