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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Tree of Friendship & Autism Acceptance

Celebrating our Differences on a Sunny Day at the United Preschool Center



WHITE PLAINS, NY – CPW's United Preschool Center (UPC) hosted its 14th Annual Autism Acceptance Celebration on April 15, 2026, as part of National Autism Acceptance Month. The day's festivities included the unveiling of the Tree of Friendship and Acceptance, an outdoor parade in the sunshine, and interactive music and movement led by music teacher Armelle from *Armelle for KIDS*.

The Tree of Friendship and Acceptance is both a school-wide collaborative art project and a fundraiser. Each year, the classrooms work together to bring the tree to life, using recycled paper to create all elements. This year funds were raised for onsite enrichment programs from Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC). FRNC provides firsthand environmental education for students and teachers. Donations from family and friends are recognized on each handprint hung on the tree which is now on display in the front hallway of UPC.

All of us here at UPC are thankful to the family and friends whose gave so generously. Your support will allow us to provide an immersive environmental education for our students. - Marcy Weintraub, United Preschool Director.

Each April, autism rights groups encourage schools and the media to shift their focus toward inclusion and acceptance of people with different neurologies. This begins with the small, but significant, change from Autism Awareness to Autism Acceptance. According to the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), many self-advocates view their neurology as a difference in thinking, not something that needs to be

cured. Self-advocates ask for acceptance and support, not isolation. Like everyone, those with autism want acceptance for both their strengths and weaknesses. *“Acceptance is about moving beyond this idea of awareness, which has been medicalized and has been used to spread ideas of autism that are stigmatizing,”* says Zoe Gross, Director of Advocacy at ASAN. *“[Autism] makes life harder, but it’s part of our experience of the world. It’s not something to be scared of.”*

Armelle Gloaguen, owner of the Larchmont-based **Armelle for KIDS**, provides multicultural education through music to children with world music classes, concerts, teacher training, parent and school presentations and workshops. Her organization provides regular music programming for the students at United Preschool Center.

Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC) is a not-for-profit organization which offers programs to people of all ages and abilities, encouraging conservation, provide environmental education, and support community access to nature, both onsite at **Rye Nature Center** in Rye, New York, and through off-site outreach programs.

The United Preschool Center (UPC), located at 456 North Street in White Plains, offers an integrated learning experience for children with and without disabilities. Within a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment, children grow together through integrated programs with activities designed to meet each child’s intellectual, physical, and social needs. Program administrators collaborate with various school districts throughout Westchester County, and UPC is an authorized Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten program site for the White Plains School District. UPC is a division of Cerebral Palsy of Westchester. For more information go to <https://cpwestchester.org/united-preschool/>

Founded in 1949, **Cerebral Palsy of Westchester’s** mission is to advance the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people living with all developmental disabilities including autism, neurological impairments, intellectual disabilities, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy. CPW’s main campus is located in Rye Brook, NY, housing a special education school, an adult day program and recreation programs. CPW operates the United Preschool Center in White Plains, as well as six group homes throughout Westchester. 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!*

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

For even more information, visit these websites:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/autism-acceptance-not-awareness/>

<https://armelleforkids.com/>

<https://www.ryenaturecenter.org/>

<https://cpwestchester.org/united-preschool/>

<https://cpwestchester.org/>