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STEVENS MEMORIAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

\$10,000 Grant Will Help the Library Work with Residents with Disabilities on Creating a Sensory Friendly Children's Room

ATTICA, NY— Stevens Memorial Community Library has been selected as one of 310 libraries to participate in round two of Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

The competitive award comes with a \$10,000 grant that will help the library purchase sensory friendly lighting, materials, and programming supplies to enhance our services to those in our community with sensory related disabilities.

“We are so proud to have been chosen for this funding, this opportunity will allow us to improve our existing services and allow us to make our patrons feel comfortable and safe in the library,” says Library Director Felicia Cecere, “We strive to create spaces where all are welcome. We also hope to get to know our residents and families with young children better through this grant to find out what they need to use the library in an educational and effective way.”

As part of the grant, Stevens' staff will take an online course in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to library work today. Staff will then host a conversation with residents about sensory friendly spaces and use the grant funds to create a designated space in the children's room for sensory friendly materials, and programming. Including furniture, lighting, and other physical items to make the space less overwhelming for patrons with sensory disabilities.

Many families feel that more public spaces that are autism friendly where they can be together and not worry about the comfort and safety of their child. “The library wants to be a part of this conversation and begin to build the relationship and foundation for a more accessible library space,” says Cecere.

If you are interested in getting involved or taking part in the conversation, please contact Felicia Cecere at atticalibrarydirector@owwl.org, or visit attica.owwl.org under the Grants tab for more information.

Since 2014, ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities initiative has re-imagined the role libraries play in supporting communities. Libraries of all types have utilized free dialogue and deliberation training and resources to lead community and campus forums; take part in anti-violence activities; provide a space for residents to come together and discuss challenging topics; and have productive conversations with civic leaders, library trustees and staff.

“Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).”