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Stevens Memorial Community Library Announces the Grand Opening of the Stevens Sensory Station and Anne Rupert Memorial Children's Room, with a Handprint Ribbon Cutting

Attica, NY - Stevens Memorial Community Library is thrilled to announce the Grand Opening of the Stevens Sensory Station and Anne Rupert Memorial Children's Room, with a Hand Print Ribbon Cutting. This project was designed to incorporate sensory needs and play into learning to closely follow the Library's mission statement, to serve and support our community so that all may succeed.

The Grand Opening will take place Friday, July 19th at 6:00 pm, light refreshments will be available and all are welcome to attend. Children in attendance will be invited to add their handprints to the new sign in the Children's Room.

The Stevens Sensory Station was made possible through grant participation 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 came with a \$10,000 grant that helped the library purchase sensory-friendly lighting, materials, and programming supplies to enhance our services to those in our community with sensory-related disabilities. The library hosted several conversations with community members about sensory-friendly spaces. Grant funds created a designated space in the children's room for sensory-friendly materials, seating, lighting, and programming.

The room will also be dedicated to the memory of Anne Rupert, whose estate was generously donated to the library in 2023, and was used for the construction costs of the room including; wall repair, floor repair and replacement, painting, and shelf replacement. The purchase of the new materials (books, Playaways, DVDs, etc.) was also covered by the donation. The library is deeply grateful for the opportunity to bring the collections up to date because of this funding. The library has also commemorated the donation with plaques throughout the library bearing her name.

As previously announced, "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," said 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 and find out what they need to use the library educationally and effectively.”

Along with including furniture, lighting, and other physical items to make the space more comfortable for patrons with sensory disabilities- the library has focused on play as an essential part of learning. According to Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD, MEd, “Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. Play also offers an ideal opportunity for parents to engage fully with their children.” We are proud to have several adaptive and imaginative play centers now available in the library. “The library wants to continue to be a part of this conversation and begin to build the relationship and foundation for a more accessible library space,” says Cecere. “We are ready to adapt to the needs of the community and be an active participant in positive change.”

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).”

