

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chambersburg Receives Grant for All-Inclusive Play-Based Learning Equipment at Memorial Park

Borough of Chambersburg, Franklin County – The Borough of Chambersburg was awarded \$49,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority’s Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program on Tuesday to implement additional all-inclusive park and recreation initiatives in the area.

“The borough is extremely appreciative of the continued support we have received from Sen. Doug Mastriano and Rep. Rob Kauffman,” President of Town Council Allen Coffman said. “This is an exciting next step for the borough to continue its all-inclusive and ADA accessible initiatives at Memorial Park.”

The Sensory Learning Pathway will feature several sensory panels and multiple sets of music chimes that encourage cognitive development and imaginative play-based learning. The pathway will also provide a more cohesive walkway between the toddler play area and the larger, kiddie play area, as the walkway will be widened and repaved, which will enable visitors to use the path whether on foot, with a stroller, by wheelchair, and more.

“It is essential that children of all abilities have the opportunity to play, both independently and with others, at community parks,” Rep. Kauffman said. “Chambersburg has continued to show its commitment to advancing this goal, and it was my pleasure to support the borough in its pursuit of grant funding for this project.”

Over the past several years, the borough has taken proactive steps to promote accessibility and inclusiveness through the addition of new amenities to its existing recreational infrastructure. In 2021, the borough received a grant from DCNR’s Community Conservation Partnerships Program to purchase and install two pieces of wheelchair accessible, inclusive play equipment at the kiddie play area. The Sensory Learning Pathway is the next step in the inclusivity upgrades initiative at Memorial Park.

“The borough has prioritized increasing accessible opportunities for residents and visitors of Franklin County,” Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill said. “I thank everyone involved in this award, and I look forward to seeing another excellent addition to our park.”

Memorial Park is the only playground in Franklin County with infrastructure in place offering inclusivity-based amenities that promote physical, social and communitive, and cognitive-based learning and recreational play among children. The pathway will create common space for children with a diverse range of abilities to play and interact together, allowing them to develop a sense of equality they would not obtain if they were separated in play. Additionally, research indicates that when children are engaged in free play that incorporates sensory features, they are better able to develop their own language, symbolic thinking, and fine motor skills.

The Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program is funded by the Commonwealth Financing Authority through Act 13 of 2012, which established the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects. The borough’s project was one of 117 GTRP awards statewide, and the only project funded in Franklin County.

For questions or comments, please contact Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill at jstonehill@chambersburgpa.gov.