



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella Announces \$250k Funding Allocation for p.s.133/bellerose Playground

TONY AVELLA August 5, 2014

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(BAYSIDE, Queens) On Tuesday, Senator Avella was joined by P.S. 133 Principal and Bellerose residents at a press conference to announce a \$250,000 funding allocation to the Bellerose Playground, located directly behind the school.

P.S. 133 has long advocated for the implementation of the Bellerose reading garden inside the playground, which is under the jurisdiction of the City Department of Parks and Recreation. The area which will now be transformed thanks to Senator Avella's grant has been gated and locked to the general public for the last decade.

Senator Tony Avella stated, “I am very proud to be able to present P.S. 133 with a check for \$250,000 to revitalize the shaded, gated area inside the Bellerose Playground into a public reading garden for the entire neighborhood to enjoy. I recently found out from the school and the local civic association that this space has been shut off from the public for the past ten years. It is such a waste of this serene piece of property. So I am very glad that by working with the school and the Department of Parks and Recreation, we will now be able to create a nice reading area for the students, parents, and area residents to visit on a daily basis.”

Principal Marianne Sheridan, stated, “We so appreciate Senator Avella’s support, both financially and emotionally, in helping us get started with this project. I also would like to thank one of our paraprofessionals and members of the Bellerose community, Roseanne Reinhardt, who really helped get this project moving. We have spoken about wanting to create a reading garden for quite a while and Roseanne took action in seeking the help of local elected officials. For the children, not only at recess but during the day, this garden will create a wonderful atmosphere for reading, which is so very important. I look forward to standing inside the newly transformed garden in the very near future.”

The project was initially submitted for consideration as part of Council Member Mark Weprin’s Participatory Budget but ultimately, did not obtain enough votes to win. Ms. Reinhardt, through the Queens Colony Civic Association, then approached Senator Avella in asking for his assistance in obtaining the necessary capital funds.

Mr. Oscar Gomez, P.S. 133 PTA President, added, “This reading garden project is something that we have been fighting to get for quite a while by obtaining the support of the community and the students. As part of the PTA, we always try to get our kids involved in their community and this was a great project outside of school work to take on in terms of advocating for this much needed transformation. We wholeheartedly thank Senator Avella for helping us get this accomplished.”