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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****March 23, 2010****School at Springbrook Set to Grow**

Oneonta, NY – Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) joined Patricia E. Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer of Springbrook, today to announce New York State approval for the School at Springbrook's \$20 million "Coming Home" Expansion Project. The expansion will upgrade the quality of life for Springbrook's students and families and fuel the region's economy. Construction is expected to begin in June 2010.

Springbrook's state-of-the-art expansion and renovation will create a specialized Autism School within the School at Springbrook for thirty-six children with moderate to severe autism, while also improving services to Springbrook's current students, families and staff. The existing school building and campus will undergo extensive renovations – including construction of a six classroom autism wing, new kitchen/cafeteria and gymnasium, three duplex-style houses and renovations to the campus infrastructure.

Headquartered near Oneonta, Springbrook is a not-for-profit, state-licensed agency serving 650 individuals and families affected by developmental disabilities from across New York State since 1966. The School at Springbrook is a residential and day school currently serving 76 students ages 5-21 with moderate to severe autism and other disabilities. Planning for the expansion began in 2006 in response to a Request for Proposal by the New York State Education Department to address the growing need for residential school space for children with developmental disabilities, especially autism.

The project, which is projected to save the State \$890,000 annually, brings many economic benefits to upstate New York. In addition to construction jobs for local companies during the twenty month building period, Springbrook will ultimately create 112 full-time, permanent jobs in the education, health and social services sectors and add \$5 million annually into the region's economy.

"The *Coming Home* project will translate to a major economic boost for Otsego and surrounding counties while significantly upgrading services to the developmentally disabled and their families," Seward stated. "The project will also mean long term savings to the state, something every single taxpayer can appreciate."

Although the New York State Education Department and Office of Children and Family Services will cover \$14.7 million of the project, Springbrook is looking to the community to help raise the remaining \$5 million. Thanks to a \$2.5 million dollar-for-dollar matching challenge from Buffalo Sabres owner B.

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Thomas Golisano and the generosity of friends and donors, today Springbrook has less than \$500,000 left to raise.

“With support from Tom, Senator Seward, our community and the State, I know that Springbrook will always be a haven for our most fragile children,” Kennedy said. “This project is simply the right thing, at the right time, for all the right reasons.

Added Seward, “At a time when good economic news is hard to come by, the Springbrook expansion is extremely significant, and will pay future dividends both economically and socially. I have been proud to partner with Springbrook in securing state support for the project and look forward to working with the school moving forward.”

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Beth Peterson at (607) 286-7171 ext. 283 or petersonb@springbrookny.org.