

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 20, 2016

Contact: Dana Willbanks

Phone: (518) 427-4301

Email: willbanksd@albanypubliclibrary.org

PRESS RELEASE

Albany Public Library Unveils Community Park at Howe Branch Ceremony Set for June 28 at 6 pm at Library in Albany's South End

ALBANY, NY—Albany Public Library is pleased to announce the opening of a new community park at the Howe Branch in Albany's historic South End neighborhood on Tuesday, June 28, at 6 pm. The public is invited to attend the event, which will include remarks by local leaders, a ribbon cutting, and entertainment by teen rap duo Young Noble Gentlemen.

"For years, the Howe Branch had greenspace that was well used by the public and our patrons. We were sad to see that Peace Park lost to the building expansion and renovation as part of the massive Branch Improvement Project," said APL Executive Director Scott Jarzombek. "As someone who spent nine years as the Howe Branch librarian earlier in my career, I am very proud that APL is reintroducing a community park at this beautiful and historic library, and that we have been able to do so in a way that the South End deserves."

Prior to a 2009 renovation and expansion, the John A. Howe Branch (originally built as a library in 1929) had a small Peace Park in the back of the building that was lovingly tended by members of the community and library staff. Unfortunately, the building project took over the greenspace and the branch has been without a park since the renovated branch reopened in 2010. The library acquired an adjacent property, which included a house that had been abandoned and left in a state of extreme disrepair, from Albany County for just \$1 in 2014. Inspections revealed that the building was severely damaged, unstable, and uninhabitable. After discussions with South End leaders and neighborhood groups, the library determined that the best course of action would be to remove the structure and replace it with greenspace that could be used by the entire community. APL used funds being held for library capital improvements by the NYS Dormitory Authority from the Branch Improvement Project to construct the new Howe Branch park.

The new park will be officially opened at the event on June 28. Invited speakers include: Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, Albany Common Council Member Dorcey Applrys, Albany Common Council Member Vivian Kornegay, South End Neighborhood Association President Joann Morton, and AVillage Executive Director Willie White.

"I left this library after getting it ready for the start of the Branch Improvement Project, and now I get to cut the ribbon on the last component of it," Jarzombek said. "It truly feels like the Howe Branch is complete now."

###

Albany Public Library (APL) educates, entertains, and empowers our community. APL operates seven award-winning branches serving the residents of Albany. Each month, about 74,000 people use the libraries to borrow materials, attend programs, access computers, and research information. More than 85,000 books, DVDs, and other materials are circulated each month. The libraries also provide 45,000 WiFi sessions and 13,000 public computer sessions monthly. Visit APL online at www.albanypubliclibrary.org. Look for the free "Albany Public Library Mobile" app for Apple and Android devices. And, follow @AlbanyNYLibrary on social media.