

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Kara McClurken**  
Bennett's Village  
434-529-6552  
[bennettsvillage@gmail.com](mailto:bennettsvillage@gmail.com)



**Bennett's  
Village**  
a place for ALL to play

## **BENNETT'S VILLAGE TO INSTALL COMMUNICATION BOARD AT PEN PARK**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – July 25, 2022**

Bennett's Village is excited to announce that a communication board for our non-verbal community members will be installed at Pen Park at the end of July! Come join us for a brief celebration of its installation on Friday, July 29th at 3 pm by the Pen Park playground.

Communication boards utilize pictures or symbols to aid those with complex communication needs to interact with peers. Communication boards on playgrounds facilitate inclusive play in natural settings. Bennett's Village President Kara McClurken is delighted to be adding this to Pen Park because "Communication boards in play spaces not only provide tools for our non-verbal neighbors to communicate their needs and desires, but they also send a message to the rest of the community that this space is an inclusive and welcoming space for all."

Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Charlottesville Riaan Anthony notes that "The communications board at Pen Park will be the first installed in a city recreational space. We are delighted to be working with Bennett's Village to make Pen Park a more inclusive playspace."

Designing and installing this board has been the collaboration of many folks: Bennett's Village, City of Charlottesville, Parks and Recreation, Printsources, Tobii Dynavox, Margaret Hess and Susan Reed from Piedmont Regional Education Program, and community members who provided input into the design. The costs to print and install the communication board was covered by a \$1500 grant from the American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AOCPMR). According to member Emily Hillaker, who applied for the grant on behalf of Bennett's Village, "The Rob Gotlin Community Leadership Award supports innovative projects that reduce physical or environmental barriers for individuals with disabilities. Bennett's Village is the first recipient of this annual grant through AOCPMR, and was donated in loving memory of Dr. Rob Gotlin."

In addition to the installation, the grant covered the printing of some smaller versions of the board to be used by schools and families as they visit Pen Park and will be available at the celebration on July 29th.



This sign was made with love using Boardmaker. PCS and Boardmaker are trademarks of Tobii Dynavox LLC. All rights reserved.

## How to Use Our Communication Board

1. Encourage your partner in play to use the board. **Look** at the pictures, **touch** the board or **say** the words - it's all communication!
2. Use the board yourself to show how! **Ask questions**, "What do you want to play?" Point to pictures on the board to make suggestions or provide choices.
3. **Return** to the board and **keep playing** and **communicating** during your visit to Bennett's Village!



For more information on how you can help Bennett's Village make Charlottesville a place where all can play, visit us online at [bennettsvillage.org](http://bennettsvillage.org). You can also find us on Instagram @BennettsVillage.

###