

# The Suffolk Times.

## Communication board added to playground

Lee Meyer | September 12, 2024



*Erica Harold (from left), Dr. Micah Kaplan, Dr. Lloyd Simon, Linda Sweeney, Paul Connor, Catherine Bosco, Justin Moore, Ryan Case, Joseph Tsaveras, Emily Whitecavage and Amanda Clark at the unveiling of the new communication board. NICOLE B. BREWER COURTESY PHOTO*

On Friday, Sept. 6, Greenport Union Free School District unveiled a new Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) playground board, sponsored by Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital. Present at the event were elementary students, school district staff and teachers, as well as hospital staff and board members.

The communication board was installed at the school district's elementary playground to assist non-verbal students in communicating with their peers and teachers. Designed by Smarty Symbols, a company specializing in visual communication support, the board uses visual symbols to aid those who are non-verbal, have communication disabilities or face language barriers, bridging communication gaps in a meaningful way, according to a press release.

"We are demonstrating that our community recognizes, values and supports everyone regardless of their ability to communicate," said Catherine Bosco of Southold, a psychiatric nurse manager at SBELIH. "As a mother of a child who has level 3, non-verbal Autism, I could not be prouder of all our efforts to create an inclusive community where resources are readily available to all. Children like my son do not have to fear social isolation due to their communication challenges."

Paul Connor, chief administrative officer at SBELIH, added, "This AAC playground board is more than just a tool—it's a bridge to connection and understanding for those facing communication challenges. At

Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital, we are committed to fostering belonging and ensuring that everyone in our community has the opportunity to be heard and engaged.”