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For Immediate Release

**Harford County Public Library Unveils Newly Renovated
Children's Outdoor Story Garden and Department in Aberdeen**

*Renovations include interactive STREAM learning spaces, tree-lined NatureMaker archway,
3-D printing, art and coding activities, and more*

Aberdeen, Md., August 31, 2022 -- Harford County Public Library unveiled the newly renovated Children's Outdoor Story Garden and Department at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 31.

Among the participants in the ribbon-cutting ceremony were Mary Hastler, CEO of Harford County Public Library, Harford County Executive Barry Glassman, Harford County Council President Patrick Vincenti and Dr. William B. Allen, chairperson of the board of trustees of Harford County Public Library.

After the ceremony, a story time took place in the new Story Garden and featured a dinosaur-themed book and Imagination Playground "dinosaur bones" for the children to create dinosaurs and other animals.

"The renovation of the Children's Department at the Aberdeen Library is a dream come true," said Mary Hastler, CEO of Harford County Public Library. "The new Story Garden provides a safe, outdoor space in a city library for our youngest customers. They also have a warm and inviting indoor space to participate in STREAM programs and activities to prepare them for future success. We are so grateful to the donors who supported this project."

The Story Garden allows the Aberdeen Library to open its walls to the outdoors by providing access and opportunity for preschoolers and their families to learn and explore. It is designed as an interactive learning space for children to explore concepts such as protecting natural resources, creating a clean environment, exploring local, state and national parks, recycling, learning the importance of clean water and more.

The Story Garden, with outdoor playground flooring tiles of bouncy foam, creates an environment that fosters and nourishes preschool learning through STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, art and math) curriculum. The emphasis is placed on developing and building pre- and early literacy skills for the library's youngest customers through curriculum-based story times, age-appropriate STREAM activities and more.

Future plans for the Story Garden include a community art project. A mosaic will be created by a local artist that illustrates the area's beautiful natural resources and sustainability. Children and adults will have the opportunity to participate in creating this outdoor mosaic which will reflect the Aberdeen community along with the environment.

Adjacent to the Story Garden is the newly renovated Children's Department that features STREAM activities for birth through elementary-age children.

The outdoor theme continues inside as children and their families enter the new Children's Department through a whimsical, tree-lined NatureMaker archway, featuring artisan-crafted steel art trees.

The new Children's Department features a magical learning space full of activities, adventures in reading and more. It includes flexible space to provide an indoor early learning activity area and STREAM activity area with 3-D printing, coding activities and creating art. Decorative overhead mobiles provide a fun learning atmosphere.

Studies show that children learn through play, repetition and interaction with their parents and caregivers. Library educators develop classes that spark the imagination and creativity for children in a learning space that promotes the protection of a clean environment for all.

As part of the renovation project, the Adult Department also received a refresh that includes new furnishings, layout and technology upgrades.

The project was partially funded by the Morris A. and Clarisse B. Mechanic Foundation, BGE Green Grant and the Friends of the Aberdeen Library. Additional funding was received from the Aberdeen community, friends and supporters of Harford County Public Library.

For more than 75 years, Harford County Public Library has provided its communities with access to ideas that inform, entertain and inspire. Last year the library interacted with its residents more than 12 million times – borrowing free materials, visiting branches and the website, using free WiFi, and attending classes and events. In 2021 Harford County Public Library was named a Four-Star Library by *Library Journal*. For more information, visit HCPLonline.org.

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