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John M. Serrine
Volunteer Executive Director
St. Johns Area Community Fund
P. O. Box 33
St. Johns, MI 48879

RE: Letter of Support for the City of St. Johns' Fantasy Forest Project

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this project review and letter of support regarding the City of St. Johns' Fantasy Forest Project. Disability Network Capital Area is a consumer-controlled non-profit agency whose mission is to advocate for people with disabilities to be included in all aspects of the human experience. We are federally authorized as a Center for Independent Living and have oversight by the Administration on Community Living. Our agency has worked collaboratively with various cities over the years as they update their park systems to ensure ADA compliance and encourage that their projects exceed basic requirements.

The brightly colored Fantasy Forest project is both enticing and intricate, consisting of numerous individual play areas surrounding a large, complex play structure. This entire playground space is situated on safety conscious poured surface facing. The components of the project have been sourced from an ADA compliant supplier of play structures. Included are sensory elements (such as the Braille panel), offering greater accessibility. An ADA compliant ramp offers universal access to the second story of the large structure. A spacious wheelchair friendly swing platform invites all users to enjoy this feature. Areas of play are delineated by wide paths, offering sufficient space for travel by persons of all abilities. There is a wide range of diverse elements within this playground. With consideration given to many differing types of ability and activity levels, it is designed for maximum play by numerous visitors.

The opportunity to enjoy the outdoors within a recreational space that respects persons of all needs, whether playing or watching, promotes interpersonal growth. This also increases positive inclusive understanding and interaction. We appreciate that the City of St. Johns continues to work towards this outcome. Fantasy Forest is a very interesting addition to the park system and enhances the quality of accessible opportunities available to the people of St. Johns.

Thank you for your time and consideration; Disability Network Capital Area is excited to see this project come to fruition. Please contact me at 517-999-2760 or email mastley@dncap.org if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael Astley

Michael Astley
Certified ADA Coordinator