

News Release – New Communication Boards Implemented in Libraries

(Thursday, July 11, 2024) Canandaigua, NY — This summer seventeen libraries across Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming, and Livingston Counties will be adding Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Boards to help library staff communicate effectively and efficiently with all patrons.

The double-sided AAC Boards feature pictures of commonly used words labeled both in English and Spanish, the Latin Alphabet, the American Sign Language (ASL) Alphabet, and numbers 0 - 9. Users point to the pictures, letters, and symbols to ask questions, share information, and converse. The boards are meant to facilitate communication for patrons who are non-speaking, have difficulties speaking, or speak a language other than English.

Adding these boards increases access to library services, programs, and spaces for patrons of all abilities, needs, and languages. Roxanne Roscup, Director of the Sodus Community Library, said, "We are excited to have an AAC Board at the library. We know that people communicate in a variety of ways, and we hope to be able to serve our patrons better by providing greater access to information through the use of these boards."

The Clifton Springs Library is also looking forward to implementing the AAC boards. Becky Sloane, Youth Curriculum Coordinator, said, "Not only will these boards help staff communicate with our diverse community of adults and youth, but we will also incorporate the boards into the library's early learning programs to expand our toddlers' language understanding and teach the different ways people communicate in the world around them."

The AAC Boards will roll out this month at the following libraries:

- Clifton Springs Library
- Cordelia A. Greene Library (Castile)
- Geneva Public Library
- Honeoye Public Library
- Lyons Public Library
- Mount Morris Library
- Naples Library
- Newark Public Library
- Palmyra Community Library
- Perry Public Library
- Red Creek Free Library

- Red Jacket Community Library
- Rose Free Library
- Sodus Community Library
- Stevens Memorial Community Library (Attica)
- Walworth-Seely Public Library
- Wood Library Association

Staff at the seventeen libraries received training on the purpose and implementation of AAC Boards, which included two interactive webinars and a tour of the Golisano Autism Center in Rochester. In addition to the boards, each library received ten books to add to their children's and teen collections that feature non-speaking characters and/or the use of AAC tools.

This project was funded by an American Library Association (ALA) Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant, in partnership with the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL), and is administered locally by the OWWL Library System. Visit ala.org to learn more.

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The new AAC Board sits near the circulation desk at the Mount Morris Library.