

## **PRESS RELEASE-REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **United Way of Susquehanna County and its Community Partners, Southwestern Energy Company and Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center Celebrate Grand Opening of Third Little Free Library at Charlie Pierson Memorial Park (Rush Ball Complex)**

[New Milford, PA] - [October 11, 2017] - Little Free Libraries are a growing global phenomenon. The small, front-

yard book exchanges number 36,000 around the world in 70 countries. Now, a new Little Free Library is available in Lawton/Rush Township, PA.

United Way of Susquehanna County along with its community partners, Southwestern Energy Company, Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center and the Boy Scouts of America, Baden- Powell Council has joined the movement to share books, bring people together and create communities of readers. A ribbon cutting ceremony for a third Little Free Library, which is now located at the Charlie Pierson Memorial Park (Rush Ball Complex) at the intersection of Rte. 267 and Rte. 706, was held on Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Special thanks to Mr. John Pierson, whose father and grandfather built the park and to Rush Township Supervisor Mr. Kevin Stockholm for allowing us to install the Little Free Library at this facility.

“Our Little Free Library doesn’t just belong to us, it belongs to the whole community,” says Kim Merithew, Director of Corporate and Community Giving. This initiative aligns with our goal of *Helping Children Do Well* focusing on programs that support academic readiness, mentorship, family stability and childhood wellness. “It’s our hope that this Little Free Library will bring a little more joy, a little more connection and a whole lot more books to our community”, added Dr. Alice M. Davis-Executive Director, Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center. “Southwestern Energy Company and its employees are excited to be a part of this community initiative” shared Mike Narcavage, Community Relations Manager.

One of the most successful ways to improve the reading achievement of children is to increase their access to books, especially at home ([McGill-Franzen & Allington, 2009](#)). But according to the U.S. Department of Education, up to 61% of low-income families do not have any books for their kids at home.

**Little Free Libraries play an essential role by providing 24/7 access to books and encouraging a love of reading in areas where books are scarce.**

**Anyone may contribute or take books. You can donate a book(s) by simply placing them in the Little Free Library book exchange near you. If you take a free book (or two) from a Library, you do not need to return that exact book.** However, in order to keep the Little Library full of good choices for the whole neighborhood, the next time you swing by the Library bring a few books to share. Little Free Library book exchanges function on the honor system; everyone contributes to ensure there are always quality books inside for both children and adults. This way, we all win!

In addition, informational pamphlets will be available to help connect the community to health and human service agencies serving Susquehanna County residents.

Special thanks are extended to the Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center Carpentry & Cabinetmaking Instructor, Bruce Castelli and his students: Tom Martin, Brian Kozloski, Brian Traver, Alex Brown and Griffin Bunnell for their expert design and craftsmanship building each Little Free Library unit. Under Mr. Castelli’s

leadership, the students are learning lifelong, valuable skills and have created a lasting community project for many, both young and old, to enjoy.

Additionally, the Boy Scouts have taken on the responsibility of stewardship for the units and the Scouts can earn community service hours towards rank advancement, says Adam Kovalchick, Acting Program Director. Special thanks to Southwestern Energy Company employees, Timmy Jennings and Kurt Brunges for their help installing the unit.

Susquehanna County residents also have access to two other Little Free Libraries located at the Springville Fire Company (3866 St. Rte. 29, Springville, PA) and the Thompson Hose Company (53 Water St, Thompson, PA 18465).

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Pictured from left to right: Timmy Jennings, Southwestern Energy; Nathaniel Darrow and Cameron Wasko, SCCTC Students in Carpentry & Cabinetmaking; Gary Fenton, SCCTC Worksite Coordinator; Dr. Alice Davis, Executive Director, SCCTC; Kurt Brunges, Southwestern Energy; Joseph Wright, SCCTC Adult Student in Carpentry & Cabinetmaking and Kim Merithew, United Way of Susquehanna County