



Sacha's Park Officially Opened in Champlain Township

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 9, 2017

L'ORIGINAL (Ontario) – A crowd of supporters, school-aged children and dignitaries gathered at 34, De La Seigneurie street in the *La Seigneurie* residential project today to celebrate the official opening of Sacha's Park, one of Canada's most inclusive parks for people of all abilities.

The inspiration of such a playground came shortly after young Sacha Chenier's passing, three years ago to the day. The young boy, who had suffered from severe disabilities after a complicated birth, enjoyed a happy life in the care of his family (parents Jason and Jacquelyn as well as older brother Sebastien) and through the friendship of his schoolmates at *École élémentaire catholique Paul-VI* in Hawkesbury. Despite all the care and loving that he received in his short but eventful life, Sacha died at age ten, on June 9, 2014.

The Chenier family subsequently bought a parcel of land adjacent to their home and convinced many partners – including Champlain Township – to create a playground where the structures and the ground itself was accessible to young and older people of all abilities. This type of inclusive and accessible municipal infrastructure is the first one to be built in this part of Ontario. The new playground has now become part of the municipality's parks.

Parents Jason and Jacquelyn expressed their feelings in a joint statement: *"We are so thrilled to finally be able to welcome children of all abilities to the official opening of Sacha's Park. It has been a dream of ours for many years to have a place that was accessible and inclusive to all children, regardless of any disability or challenges they may face. The support from the community to make this a reality has been tremendous and is a true testament of how people working together towards a common goal can do amazing things. June 9th marks the third anniversary of Sacha's passing and we can think of no better way of remembering him than by opening a playground in his name where everyone, regardless of ability, can come and play."*

Champlain Township Mayor Gary J. Barton reflected on the past few years: *"From hearing about this idea that the Chenier family had to standing here today is a great achievement. The whole project was made possible thanks to the devotion of the parents but also of countless volunteers, our volunteer firemen from both districts and our public works department during Community Build Day last September, not to forget donators, organizations and businesses which became partners along the way. I hope that families and groups will be coming from all over the region to use these facilities. Well done, people behind Sacha's Park!"*

Please read available fact sheet on Sacha Chenier (attached).

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Information:

Jason Chenier 613.676.1078
Jacquelyn Standing 613.676.0517
Paula Knudsen, CAO-Treasurer, Champlain Township 613.678.3003

