

Miracle League Baseball Field and Inclusive Playground Initiative Planned in Eastlake near Classic Park

(Eastlake, OH) – A collaboration of leaders in Lake County have put together a fundraising task force and campaign to create an exciting project geared toward children and adults with developmental disabilities. **The project is planned at the corner of Route 91 and Vine Street in Eastlake, adjacent to Classic Park, and will include construction of a Miracle League baseball playing field and a large, inclusive playground which will provide play opportunities for individuals with all abilities.** An official press conference will be held with members of the community and media at Classic Park on Thursday, September 29 at 1 PM.

There are over 2,000 residents in Lake County alone who will be able to utilize these new facilities which will be open year-round to residents across northeast Ohio. The project will cost approximately \$1.2 million to develop and build the Miracle League field and playground. This initiative will be 100% financed through private contributions and donations. The group spearheading this project has already received support from **the Lubrizol Foundation, CT Consultants, members of the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council, the Lake County Captains, Captains Charities, and the Deepwood Foundation.**

The Miracle League is a nationwide program with over 270 fields across the country. Their goal is to provide opportunities for children with physical and intellectual disabilities to play baseball and be part of a team. The Miracle League's website is www.miracleleague.com for more detailed information on the league.

The team of leaders initially putting together this initiative includes the Lake County Commissioners, City of Eastlake Mayor Dennis Morley, Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority Executive Director Mark Rantala, Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood Superintendent Elfie Roman, Deepwood Foundation Executive Director Rikke Coach, Lake County Educational Service Center Superintendent Brian Bontempo and Lake County Captains General Manager Neil Stein.

Commissioner Judy Moran, in announcing the creation of the task force said, "I am proud to be a part of the group that has been assembled for this very special Miracle League project. The field and playground will be a place for kids and young adults to come from all over the county and the City of Eastlake to enjoy the things we all do every day. It is a heart-warming project that will put a smile on the faces of everyone involved. The Miracle League Field and Playground will enhance this County as a wonderful place for special needs individuals and their families."

Lake County residents with special needs already recognize the high quality of community support through Deepwood and the Lake County school systems. Elfie Roman from Deepwood said, "This project epitomizes the inclusive spirit of our Lake County community, and reinforces that all our citizens, of differing abilities, can live, work, and play together!" Eastlake Mayor Dennis Morley commented, "I believe this is a great project for our community. This is not just for Eastlake but for all of Lake County and the surrounding area. I am honored to work with everyone on this task force to bring this project together for the very special group of kids and adults. This will be a special place for everyone to enjoy."

The funds will be collected by the Deepwood Foundation and Executive Director, Rikke Coach, and will be tax deductible. The fundraising campaign will be led by fundraising Campaign Chairman Morris Beverage III and will begin in September with a goal of having the funds raised by the end of March in 2017. LCOPEDA Director, Mark Rantala said, "This is a very special project and we look forward to making this happen. Community resources like this enhance the County's ability to attract a quality workforce. The Commissioners' commitment recognizes that quality of life items are important to the attractiveness of the community. I am confident we can raise the funds."

For more information on how to get involved with the project contact **Mark Rantala at 440-357-2290 x232** or via e-mail at MRantala@lcpport.org. Organizations interested in making a financial contribution to the project can contact **Rikke Coach with the Deepwood Foundation at 440-350-5208** or Rikke.Coach@lakebdd.org.