

CITY OF NORTH TONAWANDA



ARTHUR G. PAPPAS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mayor Pappas Attends Dedication of "Kale's Court" at Drake Elementary**

NORTH TONAWANDA—City of North Tonawanda Mayor Arthur G. Pappas, Superintendent of Schools Greg Woytila and Drake Elementary Principle Katie Smith gathered last Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup> for the dedication of a new basketball court and playground at Drake Elementary School in North Tonawanda. Initial planning for the project began over 5 years ago by the Friends of Drake School, a group of PTA members concerned with the deteriorating playground and basketball court at the school.

Additional fundraising events were held by John and Terri Litten of J L Auto. The couple contributed to the funding of the playground so that it would be enjoyed by the students of Drake School, including their Grandson, Kale Shiesley. Kale suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy, a progressive disease that took away his ability to walk. The court is named "Kale's Court" in his honor.

"Even though Kale Shiesley hasn't been a student at Drake for 4 years, the Friends of Drake felt it was necessary to honor John Litten and his family for working so hard in their fundraising efforts to make this playground a reality," said Tammy Riley, member of Friends of Drake School. "We want to thank Mayor Pappas and Senator Ortt for coming together to assist in having the old basketball court removed and the new one installed."

"I was honored to help out when approached for this project. Many children will play on this court, but there is a little boy that will never have the chance," said Mayor Pappas. "The court is adorned with Kale's name due to his courage and perseverance in the face of such a debilitating disease. The Friends of Drake School, the Litten family, as well as all the others that volunteered their time and energy, should all be commended for their work."

A local company Lafarge graciously contributed a donation of asphalt for the project. Additional help by Mayor Pappas and DPW Superintendent Brad Rowles came in the form of equipment and labor used to complete the paving of the court. With painting and striping of the court recently completed, the court is now open to the students of Drake School, as well as the children and adults of the surrounding community.

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