

## Broomall Rotary Club and Marple Tree Commission team up with Marple Public Library



*Left to Right*

*Top row: Rotarians Matt Bilker, Joe Masek, Paul Quintavalla*

*Seated: Librarian Debora Parsons and Liz Ball, Marple Tree Commission*

Last week, members of the Rotary Club and the Marple Tree Commission met with librarian Deborah Parsons to discuss their thoughts and make plans. They settled on an ambitious three part project that will provide information in the library, bring information to children while at school, and structure interactive educational field trips into local parks and arboretums. In addition, the library will be a valuable resource for adults by providing information about environmental concerns, conservation, tree maintenance, pest control and similar adult matters.

The first of the three parts is a dedicated place in the library for literature and a computer based system to provide interactive educational information. It will serve as a self-contained library within a library and will be accessible to other libraries in Delaware County. There is no similar arbor resources library in the county and it is expected to serve as a model for others.

The library will also create an outdoor aspect to the program. According to a committee member, "The field trips are a very innovative concept that the library developed and uses for other projects. In the nature library context, children will be given a knapsack containing a map and information about the particular park grounds they will be exploring. It's like a self-guided museum tour outdoors. The knapsack will also be printed information and questionnaires to fill out, coloring pages, and other age appropriate materials."

Professional pop-up signs with colorful graphics will be used by the library staff when visiting elementary schools. The staff currently works with Marple-Newtown schools and this subject will be an extension of the

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The term "Nature Deficit Disorder" refers to a hypothesis by Richard Louv in his book, "Last Child in the Woods". He states that human beings, especially children, are spending less time outdoors results in a wide range of behavioral problems. Today's children spend their time with electronics and structured activities at school and sports. There is little time or reason for just being outdoors enjoying or learning about nature. The Marple Tree Commission and the Broomall Rotary Club discussed what could be done to help our children learn about nature and turned to the Marple Public Library as the perfect place to begin.

programs that they provide. They will address the topic of the local environment and invite students to participate in the library's program.

The library's staff will soon begin the task of designing materials, ordering equipment and pulling together the many components of the program. They will be supported by the Marple Tree Commission whose expertise and relationships with other organizations will bring resources to the project. The Broomall Rotary Club will fund the project along with a grant from The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. Work is expected to be completed and introduced to the public in late March 2015, in time to help the Marple Tree Commission celebrate Arbor Day on Friday, April 24.

According to librarian Deborah Parsons, "The library looks forward to working with the Rotary and Tree Commission to provide information and fun to our users about the joy of nature."

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Broomall Rotary Club and Marple Tree Commission join to create a new program with Marple Public Library