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"From the Supervisor" column
Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

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Building a Stronger Community Through Inclusion

This past October the Town of Pittsford officially became an **Autism Friendly Community**. This notable designation by the Autism Council of Rochester underscores one aspect of Pittsford's long-held dedication to inclusivity and will help foster a better understanding of autism in our community and beyond.

Through this designation, the Town recognizes and celebrates the value that those who are differently abled bring to our community. We are committed to serving and supporting those living with autism and assisting their families. We're proud that the Autism Council recognizes our community's enthusiasm for increasing awareness of and providing supportive programming for Pittsford children, young adults, families, and caregivers living daily with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The specialized training that Library, Recreation and other Town staff have received from the Autism Council of Rochester is invaluable and will be ongoing. We will continue our work in this important endeavor by embracing the **8 Pillars of Performance for Autism Friendly Communities**:

- training resources
- community partnerships
- safety, health and accessibility
- caring and connection
- commitment and change
- inclusion opportunity
- program choices
- communication

Pittsford Recreation programs currently allow for a caregiver to attend programs for free when assisting an individual with special needs. We'll be expanding our autism friendly programming and services in the coming months. Our Recreation Department staff team is currently working on making existing programs more accessible and developing new programs and services to better meet the needs of those affected by ASD.

As we look to implement our Autism Friendly training and expand our program offerings, we are also eager to move forward in our partnership with **Special Olympics New York – Genesee Region**. Our Recreation staff team is currently planning sports and fitness programs for those with special needs, both in collaboration with and independent of Special Olympics New York.

We are working toward establishing a **Special Olympics Training Club** to serve those in the Pittsford area with intellectual and other disabilities. With this partnership, we will be recruiting volunteer coaches who then will be fully trained by Special Olympics. The club will offer various activities and sports. Coaches will help participating athletes discover the champion within! Experience is not necessary; if you are interested in coaching, or know someone who might be interested in participating as an athlete, please contact Recreation Supervisor Kate Disbrow at kdisbrow@townofpittsford.org.

We're now in the midst of our fall recreation programming and finalizing our winter offerings. We have a variety of **fall and winter programs** designed to engage, motivate and inspire. Check our Recreation Department brochure for details (mailed to homes and available at the **Spiegel Pittsford Community Center**, 35 Lincoln Avenue) or visit www.townofpittsford.org/home-recreation for more information and to register for programs online. Winter program information will be posted online by the last week of November; residents should receive our Winter Program Brochure in the mail by the first week of December.

The fall and winter months are an opportune time to experience the beauty of our **parks and trails** as well. You can fill in your **Trail Passport** while you're out exploring – if you don't have one already, pick one up at the Community Center. Or bring your canine friend to our **new Pittsford Town Dog Park** at 34 East Street – it's open year-round from 7:00am to dusk. Please note you must register with the Monroe County Parks Department to use the Dog Park, and dogs must be licensed before registering with the County. The park features two fenced off-leash areas, one each for large and small dogs. Dogs have access to play structures and owners can relax on benches and use picnic tables. Pittsford residents can license their dog/s with the Town Clerk; to register with the County for dog park access, visit www2.monroecounty.gov/parks-DogParks.php.

I hope you have the opportunity to get out and enjoy all Pittsford has to offer this season. Should you have questions, comments or ideas to share – about our Autism Friendly Community designation, our Special Olympics Training Club, our new Dog Park, or any Town programs and services – please do contact me. You may reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at bsmith@townofpittsford.org. My door is open and I answer my own phone. I'm always interested to know what matters most to you as a resident.