FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 27, 2009

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Special Playhouse for Special Kids

A fully accessible tree house, hills for climbing, tall grass to crawl through, logs to sit on and gardens for planting are part of the outdoor space created by Jeannie Nutting and David Schafer for CP Rochester's Augustin Children's Center. Nutting and Schafer have received the Healthy Hero Award from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation.

“When we learned that the teachers of the CP Rochester’s Children program recognized the need for kids to have a natural area in which to play and learn, we felt inspired to design an environment in which kids can form a healthy connection with the natural world. Workers from Habitat for Humanity and the Rochester Woodworkers Society shared our enthusiasm and were among the volunteers who contributed skills and materials for the project. Our reward? Happy kids who can experience an outdoor adventure that is designed for their special needs,” says Nutting and Schafer.

“This extraordinary outdoor classroom space is unique in its integration of form and style, encouraging fun and physical activity for kids who are often unable to play in traditional playgrounds,” says John Urban, president and CEO of Greater Rochester Health Foundation. “These two Healthy Heroes and the staff of CP Rochester saw possibilities, not limitations, in ways to motivate kids to be more physically active.”

The Greater Rochester Health Foundation wants to recognize people who are helping kids stay healthy. These individuals or groups have gone above and beyond their normal duties to successfully impact children’s nutrition and/or physical activity. Healthy Heroes are awarded $500 that is to be donated to the organization of their choice in the spirit of improving the health of children through increased physical activity and improved nutrition. People interested in nominating Healthy Heroes may visit www.beahealthyhero.org.

The mission of the Greater Rochester Health Foundation is to improve the health status of all residents of the Greater Rochester community, including people whose unique healthcare needs have not been met because of race, ethnicity or income. Three major areas of focus for the Foundation are prevention, health system improvement and neighborhood health status improvement. Within the prevention realm, helping children maintain a healthy weight is a major focus of the Foundation.

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