

FitSpace: PTA students help make Rec Park accessible to all

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Parks provide opportunities to exercise, explore and simply be in the great outdoors. And ideally, they're for everyone: young and old, fitness buff and wheelchair-bound.

Students in SUNY Broome's Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program are aiding in the transformation of one popular local spot into a space that's truly accessible for all. This fall, the City of Binghamton gave the green light to the [OurSpace project](#), which will revitalize Recreation Park with interactive PlaySpaces, as well as quiet spaces for reflection.

The plan includes FitSpace, a series of exercise stations along the walking trail. Accessible to people of all ability levels, the equipment includes both aerobic and strength exercises geared toward various parts of the body.

OurSpace chair Jennifer O'Brien wanted to create an area where older children and adults could exercise, explained SUNY Broome's Denise Abrams, chair of the PTA program.

SUNY Broome students rose to the task, guided by Professor Julianne Klepfer. Students had to decide which equipment would be most beneficial for the project, in terms of accessibility and physical fitness. They met with vendors, worked with a budget and decided where to install the stations. For the last, they walked the park in the coldest depths of winter.

"For our students, it was huge. They haven't done anything like that before," Abrams said.

This spring, the students will roll up their sleeves and put FitSpace together. The build period is expected to last much of April, with an opening date in May.

About 52 PTA students, both freshmen and seniors, are involved, as well as 10 who graduated last year, Abrams said.

"They're learning so much about picking out equipment that's suitable for everybody, as well as what goes into planning something like this," she said.



**SUNY Broome PTA students
involved with FitSpace**



**Vice President Debbie Morello, Jen O'Brien,
Executive Vice President Francis Battisti**

**Denise Abrams, chair PTA Program; Professor
Julianne Klepfer, supervisor of our portion of
project; Executive Vice President Francis
Battisti; Jen O'Brien, OurSpace Build
Coordinator**

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