



Peter G. Crummey
Town Supervisor

TOWN OF COLONIE

Office of the Supervisor

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August 20, 2024

Alexandra Robert, Acting Commissioner
Albany County Parks & Recreation Department
390 New Salem Road
Voorheesville, NY 12186

Sent 1st class mail and email to
recreation@albanycountyny.gov

Dear Alexandra,

I am writing in support of the South Colonie Girls Softball Team's application for grant funding through the Albany County Municipal Park Improvement Initiative Grant Program.

As you may know, the South Colonie Girls Softball Team is based in our West Albany Pocket Park. The mission of the organization is to foster a healthy environment for children living in greater South Colonie to learn and play softball.

Due to the Team's recent growth, improvements to the various fields have become necessary. Over the past 18 months, various improvements have been made, including, but limited to, the installation of new safety netting, resurfacing of four fields, sound system upgrades, and the replacement of ancient scoreboards. The Team has shouldered many of the improvements due to the hard work and dedication of its volunteer Board of Directors and supporters. Should the South Colonie Girls Softball Team earn the grant award money, it would be spent primarily on the removal and replacement of old fencing in Field #5, as well as throughout the Park, providing a safer and more suitable environment for our young women to learn teamwork and sportsmanship.

I respectfully request your consideration for this funding opportunity, which will help to foster positive growth at our West Albany Pocket Park.

Sincerely,


Peter G. Crummey
Colonie Town Supervisor

cc: Hon. Ellen Rosano, Albany County Legislator
Nicole DeCelle, Secretary – SCGS Board of Directors



Caitlin Deitz Graziano, DDS
108 Everett Rd. Albany, NY 12205

(518) 458-1723

office@deitzfamilydental.com

May 30, 2024

Ms. Alexandra Robert
Acting Commissioner
Albany County Parks and Recreation

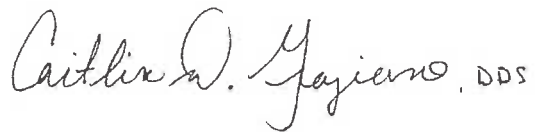
Dear Ms. Robert,

The South Colonie Girls Softball League (SCGS) is a Town of Colonie organization at Pocket Park that has meant so much to me and my family for the last three years when my daughter joined the recreational league at the age of six. Since then, she has been able to grow as an athlete and a teammate and now participates at both the recreational and travel levels. The board members of this organization have created an invaluable community and environment for our young female athletes and their families through their commitment and hard work into both league and field improvements. For example, the concessions team has enhanced and diversified their offerings to help offset funds and the tireless efforts of the fundraising team have gone into dugout and sprinkler system repairs, safety netting, field leveling, etc.

As the number of registered players has significantly increased each season for the last three years due to the league's presence and accessibility the need for more playable fields has become apparent. While the board has worked endlessly and successfully to make some of the fields safer for our athletes there are still several projects required to improve and restore the quality of the remaining fields. As a healthcare professional and a parent safety is always of utmost importance to me. Therefore, I am honored to support and recommend SCGS for assistance needed to repair many of the fencing issues. The fencing around at least two of the fields is curled, unattached, rusted, and unsafe. They are

I will never forget the years ago when I played softball at Pocket Park when it was still a combination of West Albany softball and baseball. Now, the beautiful restoration of this park and the families that come together to enjoy safe and memorable ball games will continue to live on in my memories as I watch my daughter and her teammates grow as athletes, friends, and community members. Please consider this recommendation in support of the SCGS league's proposal to provide an enhanced and safer recreational environment for our daughters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caitlin D. Graziano, DDS". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Caitlin Deitz Graziano, DDS

General dentist, owner of Deitz Family Dental

Albany County Parks and Recreation Municipal Park Improvement Initiative

Proposal/Application on Behalf of

South Colonie Girls Softball

Sponsored by the **Town of Colonie at the West Albany Pocket Park**

West Albany Athletic Association, operating as South Colonie Girls Softball, in partnership with the Town of Colonie, is honored to have the opportunity to submit a request for funding under the Municipal Park Improvement Initiative, for our playing fields located at the Town of Colonie West Albany Pocket Park, located at 90 Braintree Street, Albany NY, 12205.

1. Executive Summary Detailing the Project:

The West Albany Athletic Association was formed in 1987 from what was previously a CYO League sponsored by St. Francis DeSales Church. South Colonie Girls Softball operates under the West Albany Athletic Association name. The association is a not-for-profit corporation created for the purpose of providing a safe, friendly environment for the children living in, but not restricted to, the South Colonie School District and other local districts, to learn, practice and play the game of softball. It is an all-volunteer organization, proudly based out of the West Albany Pocket Park, and draws its members including officers, directors, division chairs, coaches, team managers, concession stand managers and other volunteers primarily from, but not restricted to, the ranks of the parents/guardians of the children participating in the league.

Our mission is to create a safe space that fosters physical fitness, growth and a love of the game of softball for youth in our community and surrounding communities. We pride ourselves on providing an inclusive and inviting environment for players of all skill levels and abilities to grow, learn, engage and flourish in their athleticism, as well as in their physical, emotional, and social health.

Over the past 18 months, our new board of directors has worked tirelessly along with other league coaches, volunteers and families in order to make the rehabilitation of our facility, and the surrounding town park, a priority. Our sponsorship committee has reached out to hundreds of businesses and organizations to engage them in our mission to create a safe space that fosters physical fitness, growth and a love of the game of softball for the young ladies in our community and surrounding communities. Within the umbrella of our rehabilitation "wish-list" was the much needed resurfacing and regrading of 4 of our playing fields, the repair of safety netting, repairs and renovations to

dug-outs and concession building, and finally, the installation of larger and new fencing on Field 5 in our park, along with the repair/replacement of several stretches of fencing throughout the park that are in need. These improvements have, and will continue to allow for expanded seasons, opportunities for more games, and the ability to host larger tournaments as a facility that other teams and leagues will want to be a part of.

To-date, our efforts have successfully allowed us to raise and invest over \$100,000 in resurfacing 4 of our playing fields, purchasing and installing new safety netting, replacing non-functional scoreboards, sound system upgrades, and other smaller park improvements such as repainting and repair of dug-outs and the concession building. A grant award on our behalf, in partnership with the Town of Colonie, would allow us to complete the last piece in the renovation of Field 5, along with repairs to safety fencing throughout the park - something that would have a tremendous impact on so many families and players in our community for years to come. The goals and objectives for this project, along with every project our league undertakes, aim to continue to create a safe and inviting environment for girls of all skill levels and abilities to grow, learn, engage and flourish in their athleticism, as well as in their physical, emotional, and social health, in a space that our players and their families can be proud to call their "home field".

Currently, Field 5 in our park is not a regulation size field, meaning that it cannot be used for games at all our age divisions. Earlier this year, we worked to resurface this field due to poor drainage and playing conditions and the final step in renovating this field is installing new and expanded fencing along the sides and back of the field that meet regulations for playing at the 10u divisions and above. There are also several stretches of fencing throughout our other fields that are bent, sharp or broken and in need of repair. We have been seeking estimates and proposals from several fencing companies, and know that the total cost of Field 5 alone will exceed \$25,000 between the removal of the current fencing and the installation of new, larger fencing and taller backstops, and anticipate at least an additional \$5,000 to for replacement of areas fencing throughout the park that are in disrepair.

2. Anticipated Project Expenses:

Removal of old fencing on field 5	\$6,000
Installation of new homerun, field and backstop fencing	\$20,000
Repair/Replacement of broken fencing throughout park	\$5,000

**estimates have been received or are in-process from at least 3 local vendors*

3. Benefits Statement - *how the project will add public value and projected impact?*

If we were to receive an award, young female athletes and their families in our community would benefit today and for years to come. An award would allow South Colonie Girls Softball to offer an improved and expanded program for girls in our county, which would be measured by an increased number of girls and families enrolled in both our recreation and competitive programs. It would provide us with the chance to host more games both inner-league and with other girls softball organizations throughout local counties, and surrounding states.

The award would also assist us in reaching our goal of creating a park, program and facility that members of the league and the county can be proud of; a safe and green space that reinforces health, wellness and community. Furthermore, the award would allow us to invest other revenue streams back into learning

4. Overview highlighting the need for assistance and any deficits that exist

Since the fall of 2022, our board of directors has made it a priority to invest all resources possible, and fundraise extensively to be able to fund the much needed improvements to our facilities. We have made it a point as an organization to invest all possible resources in improvements to our facility that will allow us to continue to grow and serve a greater number of girls in their skills and development.

The lack of a season in 2020 caused our fields and facilities to sit unused and unmaintained for a year, creating a state of disrepair and damage to the field surfaces and conditions. It also created a gap in the steady stream of revenue that comes for registrations each year as well as sponsorship income, and concession stand revenue. So we were faced with rebuilding our registration, our sponsor relationships and 5 fields that were in poor condition. We have managed to continually increase the number of girls registered for our programs and grow the number of teams and volunteers to be able to serve these deserving young ladies as well as working hard to raise funds through community business partners and events to allow us to repair and resurface 4 out of our 5 fields. An award of funds through this grant would help us continue to improve our facilities

Our organization operates on a very tight budget, leaving very little revenue (if any) at the end of the season as our goal is to invest as much as possible into the development of our girls and their opportunities. This funding would allow us to complete a project that we would not otherwise be able to complete for several years, or possibly not at all. If a grant were awarded, we would be eternally grateful, and would use every resource possible to optimize the funds given to us.

5. Availability of Matching Funds

Although we do not have the availability of matching funds at this time, we will continue to seek sponsorships and community support to fill in any funding gaps as needed. We

have created our "Help Us Bat 1000" campaign, where we are seeking businesses / individuals to join our "Roster" to support us with a \$1000 sponsorship specifically to fund our Field 5 project. Currently we have 4 partners committed to this initiative. Additionally, we have been seeking grant funding through any and all opportunities we can find, such as this proposal, along with the Youth Sports Program Funding grant, the Stewart's Holiday match program, and the Legislative grant program. Our sponsorship committee continues to work tirelessly to help us reach our goals, and our concession program is working to bring in additional revenue to direct to this initiative as well.

As an organization, we take tremendous pride in the park that we call home, and value the continued support of our Town and community. We thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal on behalf of our park and the more than 200 young ladies and their families that will create memories on these fields for years to come.

Sponsored/Submitted by:

The Town of Colonie, West Albany Pocket Park

On behalf of: South Colonie Girls Softball

Date: 05/31/2024



Nicole DeCelle, Secretary, South Colonie Girls Softball Board of Directors

518-265-9244

nicoles3479@yahoo.com

Attachments:

Letters of support from community members, Erica Restifo and Caitlin Graziano ✓

May 30, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the South Colonie Girls Softball league grant application for the Parks and Playground Grant. My family has been involved in the league since 2021 when both my daughters played on their recreational softball teams. My husband and I were immediately impressed with the league, the community of families and volunteers that worked tirelessly to make it a great experience for all, and the positive atmosphere that was apparent for developing strong and confident girls who want to play softball. As soon as our oldest daughter wanted to sign up for the travel softball program, we did so without hesitation. The environment that the league has created for girls to grow as individuals and youth athletes, was one of the many reasons our daughter was able to become a member of the Colonie Softball Modified School team this season. The group of female athletes on the school team that have their roots in the South Colonie Girls Softball league, have been frequently praised not only for their skill, but their character, sportsmanship, and overall positive attitudes on and off the field. Their path to becoming positive role models and making contributions to the Colonie community is due in part to the lessons they are learning from such an amazing and supportive softball league.

Since 2021, I have noticed a significant increase in the number of families joining the league, volunteers signing up to coach, people dedicating time to help prepare the fields, work at the concession stand, and the league hosting family events that bring hundreds of people to the park. The sense of community that the members of this league are creating and maintaining each season is commendable. You can see first hand with the quality of the fields, new fencing, sponsor signs, dugouts, equipment, etc, the significant improvements the league is making in order to make the facilities a place that girls want to play softball at and families want to be a part of. When hosting tournaments with local teams and even those from neighboring states, I constantly hear how much they appreciate what the park has to offer and how great the facilities are compared to other parks.

A strong asset of the dedicated volunteers of this league is that they continue to do what is needed to keep moving forward and finding ways to achieve the vision of the league. Not settling for mediocre, making decisions and plans to make this park and league one of the best in the Capital Region, is one of the many reasons I fully support the league being a worthwhile recipient of this grant.

As a Colonie resident for 8 years, my family greatly values and understands the importance of continuing to invest in projects that will benefit our youth. Showing them that the community sees them worthy of these investments, by funding projects that will provide safe and high quality facilities for them to grow as individuals and members of a town sports team, is crucial for their mental and physical health, and vital to our Colonie community.

South Colonie Girls Softball league is deserving of a grant that will help this league continue to provide positive and meaningful experiences for these girls that will shape who they are on and off the field. I encourage you to invest in these girls, these families, this league, and the community who are selflessly trying to show the importance of coming together for a greater good.

Thank you for your support of the youth in our Colonie community.

Sincerely,

Erica Restifo

Erica Restifo
4 Clare Castle Drive
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 859-3587