



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

After 10 years, community cuts ribbon on Bellerose Reading Garden

JOHN C. LIU June 11, 2024

| ISSUE: **PS133Q, READING GARDEN, SENATOR LIU**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Contact: Soojin Choi | 347-556-6335 | press@johnliusenate.com |

Bellerose, NY – State Senator John Liu joined the school community of PS 133 to celebrate the long-awaited grand opening of the **Bellerose Reading Garden** yesterday. The garden, which lies adjacent to Bellerose Playground and the PS 133 schoolyard, features a variety of tree and shrubbery plantings, colored concrete pavement, benches, and game tables. The garden will be used for outdoor instructional activities during school hours and open to the public after

school until dusk.

Although funding for the project was announced in 2014, a lack of collaboration resulted in the project stalling until 2019 when Senator Liu took office and worked with the State Dormitory Authority, NYC Parks Department, PS 133, and the Bellerose Civic Association to set the project on a path to completion. Once the state funding was secured in 2019, design work began in 2020, and after pandemic-related delays, construction started last year.

State Senator John Liu stated, “Good things come to those who wait, and after 10 years, we are overjoyed to cut the ribbon of one the finest examples of what’s possible when our community comes together. This project was a top priority for my office and it is incredibly gratifying to celebrate its completion today. The Bellerose Reading Garden will offer a unique learning environment for our school children, and provide our community members including many senior citizens in the area with a peaceful spot in the neighborhood to sit back and enjoy a good book. Much thanks to the Parks Department, Bellerose Civic Association, Community Board 13, and especially the collective voices of our children, families, teachers, staff and principals here at PS 133, who came together to make it happen.”

Since taking office in 2019, Senator Liu represented Bellerose in the 11th District until last year when he was redistricted into the 16th Senatorial District. The area is now represented by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.

State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky stated, “I am delighted that this project has finally become a reality. I know that the entire community, from the students at PS 133 to the members of the Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association will enjoy the reading garden.”

NYC Parks Queens Borough Commissioner Jackie Langsam stated, “We are thrilled to open the Bellerose Reading Garden, which will serve as a serene and inviting outdoor classroom for

P.S. 133 students and local community members. Bellerose Playground is an important space for recreation in the community, and we are grateful to Senator Liu for contributing to this project and for his continued support of our borough's parks."

Principal of PS 133 Matthew Paolano stated, "I am just happy to be part of this celebration that I know the community has long awaited for. This space, that is now this beautiful reading garden, is now one that residents of the community of Bellerose can truly enjoy and be proud of. I know this project has taken much longer than anyone had anticipated, but as they say, good things come to those who wait. On behalf of P.S. 133, I am just elated that our students and staff are provided with the ability to use this space to support their social and emotional well-being in a positive manner, as well as utilize the space to enhance daily instruction. Students have already read poems to one another here, read independently, as well as play chess on these beautiful new tables. Three principals have seen this project from beginning to end, and I know all we wanted was for it to be a space that all constituents of the Bellerose Community could enjoy together."

Lourdes Villanueva Hartrick, President of the Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association, stated, "This is a great example for our kids of what is possible when you are persistent and you never give up. Even though sometimes it takes a long time, if you stay true to what you want and what you believe in, you can make it happen. We are so grateful to our leaders that we finally have this beautiful space where our kids and our community can read, play chess and be with our children."