

## Sewerage Commission installs footbridge at Morris Canal in Little Falls



STAFF PHOTO BY LINDSEY KELLEHER

Fifth graders from Little Falls School No. 1 celebrated the opening of a walking path at the Morris Canal at a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by Little Falls Alliance for a Better Community June 12.

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**LITTLE FALLS** – Every year fifth grade students in Little Falls School No. 1 learn about the history of their township.

This year's lesson was a bit different and more interactive as the class got to participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony June 12 to celebrate a new walkway that was installed at the Morris Canal.

The event was hosted by the Little Falls Alliance for a Better Community. The footpath and footbridge were installed by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission.

Little Falls Councilman James Damiano, along with the fifth graders, cut a ribbon, draped in front of the bridge, to kick off the ceremony.

The footbridge project started last year but was delayed because of discrepancies with the municipality about property lines. Once the issue was squared away this spring, construction began. The commission installed the footbridge, created and installed a retaining wall for the bridge, and a path for vehicle access, according to Brian Davenport, river restoration manager for the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission. A minimal number of the trees were removed so the area could be regraded and asphalt could be put down on the area that leads from the park area down to the Morris Canal.

While working, the commission decided to create a mini Stonehenge-looking structure for students from School No. 1 to use as an outdoor classroom. Pieces of brownstone that were once part of an aqueduct in the canal were picked from the area and used to create the stone seats for students to sit on.

"You can see the hand chisel marks on them," noted Davenport.

During the event, John Veteri, a member of the Little Falls Historical Society, gave the students a lecture about the Morris Canal and the aqueduct. The outdoor event was followed by a presentation for the students at the Little Falls Civic Center.

"Mr. Veteri does a great job. It's great he shares his knowledge," said Jim Simmons, a fifth grade social studies teacher at Little Falls School No. 1.

Veteri gives a presentation each year to the fifth grade students at the civic center. The fifth graders study world history but spend a few days each year learning about the history of Little Falls. Students get to learn about industrial jobs that were once in town and get to see artifacts individuals have donated to the municipality, among other facts about the township's past. This year, according to Simmons, the ribbon cutting ceremony coincidentally fell on the same day as the annual lecture.

In the coming weeks, the commission will be pouring concrete pads for benches that are going to be installed along the walking path.

The project cost \$28,000 and was funded with a grant from the Passaic County Open Space Trust Fund.

The Morris Canal carried iron ore westward to iron furnaces in western New Jersey in the 1800s. Portions of the canal are preserved today.

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