FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
New Outdoor Reading Area Created at Park Elementary in Memory of Beloved Teacher

Munhall, PA – On Tuesday, Sept. 1, a new outdoor reading area in memory of Park Elementary Teacher Maria Heddleston was dedicated with her friends, family and colleagues in attendance. The reading area is located in front of the school on the corner of Cambria and Main Streets in Munhall.

There, children can swap, borrow or take a book and then read it on the area’s newly built bench.

Heddleston was a lifelong resident of the Steel Valley area and taught at Park Elementary for over 20 years. During the dedication ceremony, Park Elementary Principal Dr. Shaughnessy and Secondary Campus Principal/Federal Programs Director Bryan Macuga spoke about the huge difference Heddleston made in the lives of her many students.

“Park Elementary School and the entire Steel Valley School District are better places today because of Maria,” said Dr. Shaughnessy.

Heddleston’s Friend & Park 1st Grade Teacher Kim Gennari led the effort to bring a reading area to the school.

“Maria worked as a Reading Specialist, and the reading area is the perfect tribute, especially since Dylan Stramaski, a former student of Maria’s, constructed the memorial as part of an Eagle Scout project,” said Gennari. “Dylan’s memorial project consists of a large bench built around the tree, two book boxes painted to reflect Maria’s favorite things, landscaping, flowers, memory plaques, as well as a new flag and flagpole. Maria would be happy knowing that books are being put into the hands of our children. Maria is dearly missed, but not forgotten.”

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(Five photos)