



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former John Archer student gives back to his school

Derek Allen, former John Archer student and newly named Eagle Scout, recently completed renovations to John Archer School's greenhouse as part of the requirement to earn his Eagle rank.

In order to advance to the rank of an Eagle, a candidate is required to plan, develop and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to a religious institution, school or community. Derek developed a three-phase plan to fix up the John Archer greenhouse, and his proposal was approved by John Archer School Principal Deborea Montgomery and his scoutmaster.

"I chose this project because this school helped me through a very difficult time in my life, and my project is giving me a chance to say thank you," said Derek.

Phase one of the project consisted of the installation of a new floor, which now allows wheelchair access to the greenhouse and creates a level place to walk for students who have challenged gaits. Phase two of the project involved replacing the existing potting table with a redesigned and constructed table. The new table is lower and allows students with physical disabilities to access the table to work in the greenhouse. Finally, phase three consisted of creating both ground-level and raised garden beds.

To complete the three-phase project, Derek worked over the duration of two weekends, putting in six hours a day with his crew of eight volunteers. The labor and materials required for the project were donated by Derek, who raised funds needed with Panera Bread and Pizza Hut fundraisers.

"The students at John Archer School were so lucky to have Derek Allen choose us for his Eagle Scout project," said Amy Porter, John Archer School teacher and project lead. "Our greenhouse was in great need of repair, and Derek saw an opportunity to help. I truly respect the incredible amount of work that went into the planning of the project notebook, all of his organization and fundraising efforts, as well as the tremendous amount of physical labor that was required to complete the renovation."

Principal Montgomery was very appreciative of Derek's work on the greenhouse. "This project provided much needed innovation to our school's greenhouse. In addition, having the renovations completed provides the school with a place to provide students with opportunities to build vocational skills and provides sensory outlets for students. It's attractive and functional."

John Archer School is the only public special education school serving students with disabilities in Harford County. The instructional program at the school is tailored to meet individual student needs, based on individual education plan goals. Areas of focus may include communication, functional academics, behavior and social skills, personal management, community skills and career vocational skills. In addition to serving students with significant special needs, the school houses the Harford County Infants and Toddlers Program and countywide special education itinerant services.

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