



Sweet Home Central School District
"EVERY STUDENT, ONE COMMUNITY, READY FOR THE FUTURE."

The Sweet Home CSD and the Town of Amherst, the Amherst IDA and Zaepfel Development collaborated when the groups found that the North-end neighborhoods saw a need for a safe, accessible community center. Sweet Home CSD agreed to allow new spaces within a business complex to be used for a community center, which included a day care center, a gymnasium a fitness room and several satellite offices to serve the community. The center hosts after-school programs, child care, day camps, programs for seniors; support services for families, mental health and behavioral health counseling and other services. Surrounding communities are surveyed for input to determine the services that they would like to see offered. The program developed as a PILOT agreement between the town

Hodgson Russ LLP 2024 Excellence in Collaboration Award *Northwest Amherst Community Center*

of Amherst and the Sweet Home CSD. In addition the Town of Amherst and the Sweet Home CSD collaborated with Zaepfel Development, the landlords of the community center to develop a lease agreement with a buy out option. The community center offers services that cover the youngest children to elderly community members. All Sweet Home CSD residents as well as Town of Tonawanda will have access to the community center and all of its services at a reduced cost. Affordable childcare, and safe recreational activities for the most underserved community members for free or at a reduced cost. The program is the communities first collaboration between multiple governmental organizations, local businesses and communities that truly serve the people of the Sweet Home community. The project has been thoughtful, respectful and responsive to the needs of the community that it serves. Each partner involved in the project benefits in the development of the project. The project can serve as a model for all Western New York Communities as districts and town look to utilize space within their organizations.

The Northwest Amherst Community Center benefits everyone in the community from the young child, to the elderly adult. The programs and services assist families with providing much needed services at either no cost or a low affordable cost.

"In this day and age when schools are looking to provide more and more services to students and families, the ECAB Awards Committee felt that this program 'checked off the boxes' and provided much needed services that were lacking in the community prior to the collaboration between the town of Amherst, Zaepfel Development, the Sweet Home CSD, and the Amherst IDA."