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CLI donates \$2,500 toward McGuan Park wheelchair accessibility project



Jeremy Risner presents a check to Joe Lindemberger (right). Also pictured are (from left) Sarah Church, Mayor Dave Light and Safety/Service Director Mike White.

CLI has donated \$2,500 toward the wheelchair accessibility portion of the [McGuan Park revitalization project](#).

Today, CLI representative Jeremy Risner presented a check to Norwalk Mayor Dave Light, Safety/Service Director Mike White, and Joe Lindemberger and Sarah Church from the Park and Recreation Department.

"Their donation was greatly appreciated," Light said. "They have been supportive and excited about this project from Day One. There's a lot of moving parts to the project as great ideas kept coming forward that we were able to make a reality with donations like this one."

CLI raised this money through a [St. Patrick's Day bowling fundraiser](#) at [Kenilee Lanes](#) in March and from private donations contributed by community members who want to help build more facilities that accommodate people with disabilities.

"I would like to express my gratitude to CLI for their generous donation and fundraising efforts," said Lindenberger, park and rec superintendent. "Their commitment to Norwalk is second to none. I look forward to their agency utilizing this park."

CLI (Community, Life and Innovation) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to increase earnings, status and quality of life of people with developmental disabilities.

"CLI is very excited that Norwalk has been accommodating people who use wheelchairs," said John Schwartz, the CEO of CLI.



CLI has rented out its [accessible space at 16 W. Main St.](#) for the past four-plus years.

"It has really struck us how many of the renters pick the space because one of their guests use a wheelchair," Schwartz said. "I think people aren't surprised that some CLI clients might use a wheelchair, but it's a much broader swath of the community — seniors, veterans, etc."

When it comes to excluding people, Schwartz said, it's often hard to determine who isn't present.

"I heard a story from WW2 when the engineers were trying to bulletproof planes and studied the shot-up planes that came back. The first impulse was to put armor where all the bullet holes were on every plane, but someone significant noticed that the better approach was to see where all the returning planes didn't have bullet holes because that's what might be taking down the planes that didn't make it back," Schwartz said. "It's hard to identify what you don't see."

He said making spaces accommodate everybody opens up choices to everybody.

"It doesn't have to cost more if it's designed to be inclusive at the very front of the project," Schwartz said. "16 West Main and 38 West Seminary remodeling costs were the same as they would have been if they were not wheelchair accessible."

The [McGuan Park revitalization project](#) includes the addition of an [all-abilities playground](#). Lindenberger provided an update and timeline for the project at the city council meeting Tuesday night. Details are [included in a separate story](#).


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