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St. Charles County's Nature Explore Classroom At Towne Park Retains National Certification

St. Charles County, Missouri – For the third consecutive year, St. Charles County's Certified Nature Explore Classroom at Towne Park near Wentzville is nationally recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation and the Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Developed by the St. Charles County Parks and Recreation Department, the outdoor classroom is the only Certified Nature Explore Classroom in St. Charles County to receive this accomplishment, which places Towne Park among a unique network of organizations across the United States that have created effective outdoor learning environments for children.

“Towne Park's Certified Nature Explore Classroom is a dynamic, nature-based play and learning space that supports skill development in children by reconnecting them to nature,” said St. Charles County Parks Director Bettie Yahn-Kramer. “Since it opened in May 2012, it has become a very popular place for children, their families, and educators across the tri-county area to visit.”

Designed for children 3 – 14 years of age, the Certified Nature Explore Classroom at Towne Park encompasses 11 learning stations to explore. The more than 2-acre open view nature play area features a Gathering Area, Music and Movement Area, Open Play Area, Messy Materials Area, Sand Play Area, Nature Art Area, Wildflower Area, Building Area, Dirt Digging Area, Balance Area, and Water Area. The classroom at Towne Park is situated at 100 Towne Park Drive, Wentzville, MO 63385, which is located off Highway 61 at the Farris Road exit. The park opens daily at 7 a.m. and closes one-half hour after sunset.

“Each area of the classroom is designed to motivate children by offering interactive elements – including musical instruments made of natural materials, climbing structures, wooden blocks, gardens areas, and natural materials for building and creating art – that would give children important and inspiring nature experiences,” said Yahn-Kramer.

In addition to the nearly 80,000 guests who visit Towne Park annually, 27 schools and nearly 2,500 students, teachers and parents have explored the classroom and participated in free organized school field trips since its inception. The Parks Department offers area schools and homeschool organizations the opportunity to participate in nature and history-based activities during the class visits, and exploring the classroom is the highlight of the trip.

For more information about the classroom, Towne Park or scheduling a school visit, contact the St. Charles County Park and Recreation Department at 636.949.7535 or visit www.stccparks.org.

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