

Field plan celebrates boy's life

Colchester group raises money for recreational park

By **JULIE A. VARUGHESE**
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COLCHESTER — A group of residents is looking at buying a parcel to build a Little League field in honor of a 6-year-old boy who died recently of a terminal illness.

Cody Camp of Colchester died in October of Burkitt's lymphoma, a rare form of cancer.

Now, after raising \$90,000, a group is hunting for a prime piece of property for a field it will donate to the town, which desperately needs recreational fields.

Robert McGovern, whose son, Alec, was best friends with Camp, said the ideal parcel would be about seven acres — because more than one field can be built — along with restrooms, lighting and concession stands.

Multiple modern-day Little League fields have been

AT A GLANCE

- **Colchester has three ball fields** and six multi-purpose fields.
- **The facilities are scattered** throughout the schools, the Recreational Complex and other spots.
- **For more information,** call **537-7297**.

built within complexes for ease of maintenance and lower cost, said Parks and Recreation Director Jay Cohen.

So far, the town has three baseball fields and six multi-purpose fields scattered throughout town at the schools, the Recreational Complex and other spots.

"There's really a shortage on playing space," Cohen said, explaining the space the town has already is overused. "Natural turf can only take so much playing."

Cohen said playing fields are given a break for one year to recuperate, but that only restricts the number of fields available in a town that has doubled in population in 20 years.

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He said the local group's idea is a good one.

"We just have to make sure it fits into a feasible plan for the town and it really works with the town's plan," Cohen said. "We have to be good stewards for the town's resources."

He said the local group has been keeping the town updated about its plans.

McGovern said a Little League field can be placed on a parcel as small as one acre, but that wouldn't leave much room for other facilities.

He said four acres is needed for one field. This would allow adequate space for parking areas

and concession stands.

McGovern said his group is in talks with numerous landowners.

The group's goal is to raise \$250,000. It hopes to secure a parcel at a price lower than market value or through a donation.

At the moment, McGovern said the group is working toward being recognized as a nonprofit organization. Then some of its donors, who are Pfizer employees, can have as much as \$15,000 of their contributions matched by the company.

Ann Cody Zory, Camp's aunt, who lives in Old Saybrook, said she is heartened by the generosity she has witnessed so far.

"It's a very difficult time — we miss him very, very much," she said. "It's a wonderful tribute to Cody, who loved sports."

The group hopes to build and open a field by next year.

"One of the concerns his mother had right after Cody passed away was, as people go through their hectic lives, are people going to forget Cody," McGovern said. "We just felt this was a way to memorialize a terrific young boy and use that effort to give back to the town."

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