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ACDS honored Senator Shelley Mayer at an outdoor ceremony on September 21. The socially distanced ceremony was held at ACDS’s Westchester special needs pre-school at 1 pm. The pre-school, which is in the Senator’s district, serves children ages 3-5 with developmental disabilities. Senator Mayer has been instrumental in the school’s success since its inception in 2016. ACDS Executive Director Michael Smith remarks “Senator Mayer has been a tireless advocate for ACDS, children throughout NY State, and the developmental disability community at large. Our agency owes her a tremendous debt of gratitude. We are pleased to have this opportunity to recognize the Senator for her commitment to ensuring a bright future for children of all abilities. It is a full circle moment to honor Senator Mayer in the site where she cut the ribbon to open the school in 2016, when it had 6 students. It is with profound gratitude that we honor her today, with the school serving 160 Westchester children with disabilities.”

Senator Shelley Mayer said, "It has been wonderful to work with Michael Smith and ACDS team as they moved from concept to opening a school in Westchester to serve preschool students with disabilities.  I am honored to be recognized for my advocacy -- it truly is the work of the teachers and providers, like ACDS, that makes such a difference in our children's lives."

ACDS originally intended to recognize Senator Mayer at its annual Flight of Dreams event, which is hosted with Ross Aviation at Westchester County Airport. The event was cancelled due to the pandemic but ACDS wanted an opportunity to recognize the Senator for her service to the people of NY State, the 37th District and to children throughout NY in her role as Chair of the State Senate Education Committee.

**ABOUT ACDS**

ACDS, with headquarters in Plainview, NY, is dedicated to providing lifetime resources to individuals with Down syndrome, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Since 1966, the agency has been helping those living with developmental disabilities develop to their fullest potential. On Long Island, ACDS works with people from birth through adulthood and offers programs for entire families. ACDS currently serves more than 1,000 people through Early Intervention and preschool special education programs; respite and recreation programs for children, teens, and adults; Brokerage/Self Direction and Fiscal Intermediary Services; day habilitation; and eight supervised group homes. Mirroring the successful outcomes of its special education preschool on Long Island, ACDS opened a preschool for ages three through five in Westchester, NY, in 2016. For more information, visit acds.org or call 516-933-4700.

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