Dear Friend,

Dedicated to exploration and discovery, the Nature Explorium provides children, preschool through the young teen years, with the opportunity to learn and reinforce valuable life experiences in the out of doors. Located just off the Children's Room at MCPL-Centereach, the Explorium has adopted and expanded on guidelines developed by the Dimensions Educational Research Foundation and the Long Island Nature Collaborative for Kids and serves as a national model for public libraries.

Inside the outside space, children have access to a wide array of free recreational and educational activities. Drop-in places – Build It, Play It, Splash It, Create It, Climb It, Read It and Dig It – engage children in theatre, music, arts and crafts, water fun, gardening and planting, moving around and that old-fashioned special joy found playing in dirt. Special programs include Concept Connections: Over, Under and Through; Campfire Stories and Songs; Go Outside!; Nature Journaling; Sense It!; and Nature Detectives: Rocks & Minerals. Through this type of hands-on outdoor learning, children and their families become knowledgeable about nature and their surroundings, and are introduced to the importance of individual and community responsibility for the environment.

To make the Explorium “mesh” with the library setting, we identified certain features that could directly connect to the Library's mission. Instead of a traditional brick path (listing donor names), our walkway is the Book Path and donors select their favorite children's book or quote. The Friends Bench (sponsored by the Friends of MCPL) displays Long Island land and sea animals also engraved on bricks. Wooden “READ” plaques, hung creatively around the space, provide favorite quotes about Reading, Exploration, Adventure and Discovery.

You can be a part of this space in a way that is both permanent and personal and to which you and your family can point with pride and shared memories in the years to come. We invite you to:

- **Build Our Book Path** by naming a brick with a book title or quote from a children's book.
- **Engrave a READ Plaque** with a quote about reading, exploration, adventure, or discovery.
- **Make a Special Donation** for an individualized naming opportunity.

**Don't delay!** Be a part of this very special community space today. You, your children and grandchildren will be able to visit your special book title or quote on the Book Path for years to come.

Sincerely,

Mario Ruggiero
Chair, MCL Foundation