



**CITY OF DANBURY  
PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT**

HATTERS COMMUNITY PARK  
7 EAST HAYESTOWN ROAD  
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06811

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Mayor Mark D. Boughton  
Members of the City Council  
City of Danbury  
155 Deer Hill Avenue  
Danbury CT 06810

September 5, 2012

Re: Donation from United Way and Boehringer Ingelheim  
Dear Mayor Boughton and Council Members:

The Parks and Recreation Department has received a request from the United Way to install a Born Learning Trail as part of the Rogers Park playground. The trail is an interactive and playful tool designed to help support early learning and positively impact the school-readiness levels of young children. Danbury currently has a learning trail at Mill Ridge School and similar trails can be found in surrounding towns. The value of this donation will be approximately \$4,000.00. Boehringer Ingelheim will supply all materials and provide installation.

I request that this generous donation be accepted at the next meeting of the City Council.

If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Kaplanis  
Director of Recreation



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## United Way Born Learning Trail

The Born Learning Trail is an interactive and playful tool designed to help parents, caregivers, and communities support early learning.

### Overview

**Why it's important:** Almost half of America's kindergarteners enter school unprepared, with at-risk and impoverished children already 1-2 years behind. Connecticut has the widest achievement gap in the country, reflecting the academic disparity between students from low and higher-income families.

Preparing children for school has been a focus of United Way for many years. We are renewing that focus through our Strong Start initiative. Our primary goal is to eliminate the achievement gap before it starts.



Children are constantly learning, right from birth. The early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn during those years depends on the experiences they have each and every day.

When adults interact with children—talking, singing, and playing rhyming games – they stimulate language and vocabulary development and build important foundations for learning to read. The United Way Born Learning Trail is a set of ten (10) signs that help parents and caregivers interact and create learning opportunities for children through fun games and the surrounding environment.

**How it works:** Parents and caregivers follow the trail with a child and participate in activities on the signs. The fun, simple activities are designed to encourage learning.

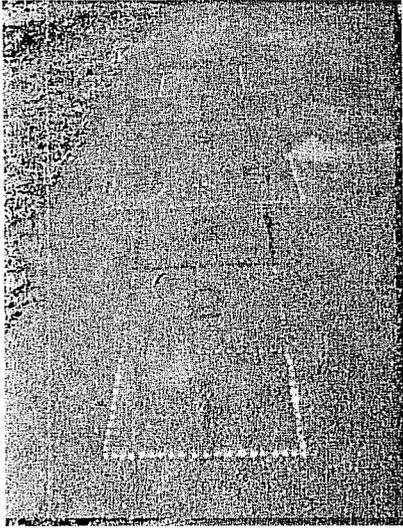
**Who:** The United Way Born Learning Trail is appropriate for parents and caregivers of children ages birth to five.

**Where:** The Trail is a great family-friendly addition to parks and children's playgrounds. The ideal location is a stroller-friendly paved surface to make it easy for parents and young children to access and play the games (learning about shapes, the alphabet, and playing hopscotch are just a few examples.)

We would like to install a Born Learning Trail at Rogers Park. A trail will provide an additional learning activity and resource for young families in our community.

**Benefits to City of Danbury:** By simply allowing a Born Learning Trail to be built on its property, the City can positively impact the school-readiness levels of young children. The City can also promote the United Way Born Learning Trail as a resource for families.

**Cost:** The trails will be sponsored by Boehringer Ingleheim and all installation expenses will be covered.



**Logistical considerations:**

UWWC is happy to work with designated city representative  
Signs are secured to posts set in concrete, so access to water will be needed for the installation event.  
Several signs include activities with interactive elements that we would like to paint on the paved surface. For example, letters of the alphabet, basic shapes such as squares and circles, and perhaps even a few animals.  
Small logos for United Way and the corporate sponsor appear on the bottom of the sign.  
UWWC will work with corporate partners to replace signs as needed. We assess trail maintenance needs at least once a year to complete light maintenance.

United Way of Western Connecticut has successfully installed Born Learning Trails in Danbury, Newtown, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford.

By simply allowing a Born Learning Trail to be built on its property, a land donor can positively impact the school readiness levels of its communities' youngest members. Connecticut has the widest achievement gap in the country, reflecting the academic disparity between students from low and high income families.

United Way of Western Connecticut has successfully installed Born Learning Trails in Danbury, Newtown, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford.

**Sponsorship costs:** UWWC will work with sponsors to install a Born Learning Trail. A three year sponsorship of 1 trail costs \$4,000 and includes all materials, publicity, and staff time.