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FROST VALLEY YMCA
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Frost Valley YMCA is Awarded Grant for Autism Support Weekends

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism awards Frost Valley a grant to underwrite upcoming Austism Weekends

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CLARYVILLE — Frost Valley YMCA has been awarded a generous grant in the amount of $4,422 from the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism, to support the organization's two annual Autism Support Weekends.

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism was established in 1998 by former NFL quarterback Doug Flutie and his wife, Laurie, in honor of their son, Doug, Jr. who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Since the inception of the Foundation, it has raised millions of dollars for families affected by autism.

Frost Valley's twice-yearly Autism Support Weekends are designed to provide respite, physical activity, outdoor learning, and social opportunities in a wholesome, healthy atmosphere for families with a member with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The 2017 weekends will be March 24-26 and June 16-18. The weekends began in 2014 and have since underwritten specialized programming fees and lodging rates for 41 children and young adults with ASD. Frost Valley has also provided 71 family members with weekend amenities at greatly reduced rates. Throughout the weekends, all family members feel included and are surrounded by other who understand their experience. "Everyone here is all about love, diversity, and acceptance. And we feel it," said one past participant.

The Autism Support Weekends have become so beneficial for so many, that Frost Valley CEO Jerry Huncosky accepted the "Sponsors' Award for Advancing a Cause" in the amount of $2,500 from YMCA of the USA on February 9, 2017, for "outstanding work toward strengthening communities." The award will also help fund the weekends.

Weekends begin Friday night, creating community for the families through icebreakers. For children with ASD, Frost Valley's most popular regularly-scheduled activities on Saturday and Sunday are: Pond Exploration, Candle Making, Garden/Greenhouse, Mad Science, Mega Bubble-Making, and traditional camping programs such as snow tubing, hiking, archery, and boating. Programming solely for families in the Autism Support Weekend include Sensory Hikes, guided walks on nature trails to explore smells, sights, sounds, and surfaces and the Sensory Room, where a variety of objects that calm and focus attention.

Throughout the weekend, Frost Valley staff take care of the details, including a variety of lodging, adapted programming, and special dietary needs, so that guests can relax, have fun and make friends. Guests with autism stay at no charge, and friends and family stay for a

reduced rate. A variety of lodging options are available. To register, contact Frost Valley by calling 845-985-2291 ext 450.

Photos and interviews are available upon request. Please contact Director of Marketing and Communications Amanda Hinski at AHinski@FrostValley.org

About Frost Valley YMCA

Frost Valley YMCA is a values-driven organization that fosters youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility through outdoor educational and recreational programs for all. Located in the heart of the Catskill Mountains, Frost Valley provides year-round access to nature and fun through programs such as summer camp, adventure trips, farm camp, equestrian programs, group and family retreats, school trips, teambuilding and more. Frost Valley is guided in this pursuit by its core values which serve as pathways for guests as they bond with nature and each other: Caring, Community, Diversity, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Respect, Responsibility, and Stewardship.

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