



Mayor John E. McCormac

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Woodbridge Police Department Arrest Three Juveniles for Setting Fire to Matthew Jago School #28 Handicap-Accessible Playground

Woodbridge Township – Mayor John E. McCormac and Police Director Robert Hubner announced that three juveniles have been arrested by the Woodbridge Police Department (WPD) on charges related to setting a fire that partially destroyed the “Boundless” playground at Matthew Jago School #28 located in the Sewaren section of Woodbridge Township. The August 1 fire caused more than \$100,000 in damage to playground equipment and park facilities.

“I am gratified that the Woodbridge Police Department was able to make arrests within hours of the fire. These arrests send a strong message to anyone who thinks that setting a fire and destroying thousands of dollars of playground equipment is simply vandalism,” said Mayor McCormac. “I would like to thank neighborhood residents – and the media - for their assistance and cooperation in helping the Woodbridge Police Department and the Middlesex County Prosecutor’s Office conduct a thorough and effective investigation.”

According to Director Hubner, the juveniles (age 15, 14 and 14) were arrested on August 3 after Township officials and the WPD toured the fire-damaged equipment at the Matthew Jago School #28 handicap-accessible playground. The WPD Detective Bureau and uniformed police officers conducted an extensive investigation, speaking with neighbors and residents of the Sewaren neighborhood. Information developed led detectives to the suspects, who were allegedly observed at the playground in the late afternoon of Wed., Aug. 1.

The fire was reported to the Woodbridge Township Police Department 9-1-1 Dispatch Operations Center and the Port Reading Fire Department at 5:45 PM on Wed., Aug. 1, 2018. The initial report was made by a neighborhood resident who spotted the fire. The Port Reading Fire Department responded to the scene within minutes of the report. Upon arrival, Port Reading Fire officials reported that a large section of playground equipment was fully engulfed in flames. The fire was under control by 6:30 PM.

The Matthew Jago School #28 “Boundless” playground was constructed in August 2008 with a \$250,000 Open Space Grant from the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. A “Boundless” playground is a fully-accessible playground designed to provide handicapped and challenged youngsters of all ages, skills and experience with many and varied play events. The custom-designed “Boundless” playground included more than 60 different and challenging pieces of equipment, including wheelchair access ramps, swings, platforms and seats; monster sliding boards; tube slides; tree, snake, coil, and centipede climbing ladders; a crazy maze adventure area; benches and tables – all handicapped accessible. Additionally, Matthew Jago School #28 is home to Camp P.A.C.E. (Parents’ Organization Program for the Advancement of Children’s Education) which serves autistic and challenged youngsters.

The investigation by the WPD and the Middlesex County Prosecutor’s Office is continuing. Anyone who may have seen any suspicious activity prior to the Port Reading Fire Department arriving on the scene at 5:45 PM on Wed., Aug. 1 should call the WPD at: 732-634-7700. All information will remain confidential.

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