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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eagle Scout Candidate Builds Shed for ECLC

CHATHAM – Since sixth grade, Will Carey of Chatham has been volunteering to help children with special needs at the Y in Madison. There, he befriended youngsters with different challenges, including some who attend the private special-needs school run by ECLC of New Jersey in Chatham.

So, when it came time for his Eagle Scout project, he immediately thought of helping those same young people. “Over my years of volunteering with the kids, I really enjoyed what I did with them,” said Carey. “I like giving back to kids who are not as fortunate as others.”

Carey offered to build an 8x8-foot wood shed from a kit and paint it for the school to use as outdoor storage for gym and playground equipment. “I wanted to build something for them and that’s when I came up with the idea of the shed, so they didn’t have to waste time bringing equipment outside and back in,” said Carey.

In turn, ECLC students in the Key Club and Angels organized a walkathon to raise money for the kit. The entire study body participated, asking family and friends for pledges, and then walking around the Lum Avenue turf field, which is behind the school.

Carey credits his mom, Barbara, for introducing him to volunteering. She works as a lifeguard and swim instructor at the Y and started bringing her son over to help out many years ago and it was an immediate fit. "He just took to it right away," said his proud mother, "and when he stopped playing football in high school, he was able to volunteer three days a week."

Carey is a junior at Chatham High School and anticipates that he will move up to earn his Eagle Scout rank in the next few months.

About ECLC

Established in 1970, ECLC of New Jersey offers lifelong services -- education, enrichment and employment -- to children and adults with special needs, including those diagnosed with autism, Down syndrome and severe learning and/or language disabilities. ECLC has schools in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus enrolling more than 300 students.

As students prepare to graduate, transition specialists from ECLC's affiliate Community Personnel Services (CPS), take over, guiding them into the next chapter of their lives. CPS specialists help students find meaningful jobs in their communities and provide ongoing support and advocacy in the workplace.

Graduates who are not ready for work are guaranteed a spot in the P.R.I.D.E. program, where they enhance their independent living skills, socialize with peers and volunteer. A defining hallmark of P.R.I.D.E. is that clients choose their activities and are rarely in the center all day. Learn more about ECLC at www.eclcofnj.org.

ECLC is a member of the Alliance of Private Special Education Schools of North Jersey, a coalition of more than 30 state-approved private special education schools dedicated to helping parents and educators better understand and access appropriate program options. Learn more about the Alliance at <http://specialeducationalliancenj.org>.