

In the past, the feeling of pure joy associated with climbing and watching the world from a treehouse has eluded children with physical disabilities. Not anymore...universally accessible treehouses are rising up across America! The Pepper Family Accessible Treehouse, the first accessible treehouse in Illinois, opened in 2007 to the delight of area residents and of groups traveling from far & wide. Located in Barrington, a northwest suburb of Chicago, the treehouse features 2,000 square feet of winding ramps, open air decks, a gazebo, and an enclosed cabin with electricity. At 511 Lake Zurich Road in beautiful Citizens Park, this magnificent structure provides a place for people of all ages, with disabilities or without disabilities, to experience nature, gather for social occasions, play in the cabin, and create memories.

The inspiration to build the treehouse began with a NISRA staff member discovering Forever Young Treehouses, Inc. while surfing the internet. Forever Young, Inc., a private non-profit organization that designs & constructs treehouses for schools, camps, and communities aims to build one accessible treehouse in every state of the U.S. "Our goal," says Bill Allen, founder of Forever Young, "is to help everyone, regardless of ability, see the world differently, and enjoy the freedom and peace that a treehouse can provide." A partnership of the Barrington Park District, the NISRA (Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association) Foundation, and Forever Young Treehouses, Inc., the treehouse garnered media attention and three prestigious awards within its first year of existence.

To watch a short video clip produced by superstation WGN-TV in Chicago, click on the following link. When you reach the station's web page with "Cover Stories", scroll down to "Places," and then choose "Everybody's Treehouse."

<http://wgntv.trb.com/news/local/coverstory/>

Other links of interest

Barrington Park District www.barringtonparkdistrict.org

NISRA & NISRA Foundation www.nisra.org

Forever Young Treehouses, Inc. www.treehouses.org