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Sharing the thrill of a treehouse

Left: It was a happy day for 18-year-old Chris Osborne of South Burlington as he helped to cut the ribbon and then led a parade of all ages eager to visit the new universally accessible treehouse. Chris's sister Rose pushed his wheelchair along the ramp that curves through the trees of Oakledge Park to the Treehouse perched high above the ground. Chris's comment on the experience, never before available to the young man who has cerebral palsy, was "It felt like I was climbing up to the treehouse." The official celebration on Friday morning at Oakledge Park was attended by a large crowd including little children, many people in wheelchairs, and seniors, all of whom will now be able to experience the thrill of spending time in a treehouse. The Treehouse, built by the four-year-old Burlington-based non-profit Forever Young Treehouses, was officially turned over to the City of Burlington Friday morning. It is the eighth accessible treehouse built, but the first as a community resource. Mayor Peter Clavelle, accepting the treehouse on behalf of the city said, "The quality and creativity of the design will make it more than just a treehouse. Our treehouse is a work of art which integrates beautifully with the natural environment of Oakledge Park." He envisioned preschoolers and scout troops visiting the treehouse, seniors coming to play cards, and even City Council meeting there to ponder difficult questions. Forever Young Treehouses has built treehouses in five states and has a goal of one in every state by 2008.

Photos by Rosalyn Gra-

