



A Dream Come True Playground



Dreaming since February 10th, 2001

An Accessible Inclusive Playground

1050 Neff Avenue

Harrisonburg, Virginia

Entrance to the playground is on Thomas Bowers Circle

For the health and safety of our guests please follow these rules:

- No smoking
- No pets (service animals welcome)
- Please wear flat soled shoes—high heels create holes in the rubber surfacing.
- Make sure your children wear shoes—the rubber surfacing becomes hot in the summer!

Thank you for respecting the playground rules.



Our Story: "A Dream Come True"

A History of the Playground Project

"A Dream Come True"

2001—2011

Never underestimate the power of a dream of a group of kids!

In February 2001, a group high school Girl Scouts from Girl Scout Troop 506 were meeting in a classroom in the West Tower of Rockingham Memorial Hospital. Monthly this group of girls met to make baby hats for the newborns in the Family Birth Place. The hat making service project had been a regular service project of the girls for several years, resulting in over 2,000 newborn hats!

During this meeting, the girls discussed possible community service projects for their Gold Award. The Gold Award is the highest award given in the Girl Scout program. Community service was a focus of this group of scouts and determining a project for their Gold Award was going to be a challenge. The troop had spent years involved in numerous areas of service to Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

The girls did not take long to determine that they wanted to design and build a playground where children with and without disabilities would be able to play together. The idea and dream began and have not wavered from that moment. The girls started by researching locations of existing accessible inclusive playgrounds in Virginia to see if any playground existed that they could visit. They looked into play equipment companies and began pricing equipment. Given their ages and the tremendous task, the amount of work the girls accomplished is staggering. They raised the initial \$22,000 toward the project before the end of the Girl Scout phase.

Almost immediately, a meeting was set up with David Wigginton with the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation and the possibility of land being designated for the girl's playground near Kids Castle. The girls met with David Wigginton, and the Department of Parks and Recreation took them seriously! The city agreed to donate the land near Kids Castle for the new playground. We were given the small area inside the fence just off the parking lot. It seemed large and wonderful to us. The name of the playground, "A Dream Come True" was chosen within a few weeks of the first thoughts of the playground.

The girls have grown up over the past seven years and are no longer in Girl Scouts. In 2004, the project became a community service project with full support of the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation. All funding was turned over to Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation until the playground is built. The playground project, "A Dream Come True" continues to be an all volunteer effort.

The location of the playground has moved two more times. For a couple of years it was going to be located at the west end of Purcell Park just past the tennis courts where the old airplane was located. We were up to 10,000 square feet and had our first actual conceptual design on paper. In January 2007 "A Dream Come True" Playground will be the focus of a new Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation Park to be located on Neff Avenue near Sun Chase Apartments. What an honor to have a park designated for this wonderful, unique and very necessary playground.

The girls are now young adults, but the one thing that has not changed is their commitment to the playground and the children who have been dreaming along with us for the past seven years. Our memories go back to the children in the classroom at Pleasant Valley Elementary School who shared their play dreams with us years ago. We know they are older, but we have honored their play wishes by including each in the playground design.

Inspiration continues to come from many places in the girl's lives. Both of their scout leaders have worked with children with severe disabilities in their careers and volunteer work. Friends and sister scouts include dear people with challenging disabilities and catastrophic diseases. Some people just wait for things to happen and other people go out into the world and make it happen. These girls decided to try to Make A Dream Come True.



**The Story Continues
June 2008
Dreams Can Move Hills!**

We celebrated our seven year anniversary on February 10, 2008 and we continue to move closer to the reality of this playground being built.

So much is happening right now, we are making decisions about specific pieces of playground equipment, placing the equipment into the design, creating unique playground equipment that does not currently exist with playground companies, making selections for the accessible ground covering, working with the architects on creating "little buildings" for imaginary play and the list goes on. We hope to soon be able to put a list of the types of equipment that will be on the playground and some pictures of equipment that will be similar to what we have chosen.

Currently the playground design is in its final stages of development, and it is so hard to describe what an exciting adventure this has been to watch all of this come to life on paper.

You must drive by the site and watch the excavation in progress!!!

The excavation of the park site on Neff Avenue will be completed during the summer of 2008 and we have one more year to finish raising the necessary funding for the playground equipment and the accessible ground covering.

The playground equipment and the ground covering are the responsibility of the "A Dream Come True" Volunteers and we are determined to reach a goal of \$400,000 by spring 2009. We promised the children and we will somehow reach the goal.

The City of Harrisonburg has graciously donated the land, paid for the excavation of the park, public utilities, will construct the inclusive accessible restroom facility and picnic shelter, parking lot and entrance road. The City has taken on the entire cost of the new park and all costs associated with opening and maintaining a new park in the Department of Parks and Recreation.

We say thank you over and over to The City of Harrisonburg, The City Council, and The Department of Parks and Recreation for believing in our dream and helping it become reality for the children.

Good things are happening in our community!

We need your support with fundraising :)
Please support the playground by making a donation toward the playground equipment or the
accessible ground covering.

All donations come from the heart and are so appreciated!
Thanks so much

August 2008
Thomas Bowers Circle

The excavation of the park has now been completed and on Friday, August 8th the street sign for the entrance road to the park and playground was put in place. The entrance road is named in honor of Thomas Bowers. The parking lot and turn around circle are completed and construction of the restroom facility will begin within the next two weeks. Progress Continues!

September 3, 2008
"A Dream Come True" Playground
Signs USA

Thanks to Signs USA we now have a beautiful sign at the playground announcing to the community the location of the playground and when it will be completed.
Drive by and see the great sign and the construction underway for the restroom facility.

September 15, 2008
Playground will be built in two phases
We need your help!

The cost of the entire playground including playground equipment, the sensory garden and the accessible ground surfacing has become a very expensive project for the volunteers; the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation and the city of Harrisonburg.

The volunteers have raised approximately \$258,000 and the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation has helped locate funding sources to increase funding to around \$640,000. We will need an additional \$500,000 to build the complete the entire project in one phase.

The cost continues to go up because we have been working on the playground for over 7 years and the price of equipment becomes more expensive over time. We have designed an amazing playground that will serve the play needs of children who have not been able to play and for all of our healthy children who play every day.

The play equipment is safe and high quality and some of the equipment will be uniquely created just for the "A Dream Come True" Playground.

We realize that as volunteers we are asking a lot from the community to support such an expensive service project. It is our hope and dream that you will understand the incredible importance of this playground. Please call, email or write to us and ask any questions you may have. We will do our very best to answer your questions.

Phase One will be constructed during the spring and summer of 2009 and the playground will open during the summer of 2009. Fundraising will be ongoing until the entire playground is completed. We

will continue to work very hard to raise the funding necessary for the play activities that are to be added during the construction of Phase Two.

Examples of play equipment that will be included in Phase Two:

1. The Little Farm—This a wonderful little play barn where children will be able to play both inside and outside of the barn. The barn is both accessible and inclusive and has been designed just for our playground. We are looking for a business to sponsor The Little Farm. If a business sponsors the Little Farm they will be able to name the farm. We also need the assistance of a special crafts person to help build the barn.
2. The Draw Wall—In the Sensory Garden we have a chalk draw wall designed that will provide children a place to create with chalk. The chalk wall is accessible to children in standing and seated positions. The wall will provide a temporary place to display a child's art work. We are excited to announce that The Draw Wall has been completed and will be present when the playground opens on May 1st, 2010. The Draw Wall was designed and created by Richmond Rockscapes.

The "A Dream Come True" Volunteers remain committed to the playground and we need your support. Please send a tax-deductible donation to The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham today.

Spring / Summer 2009

Many wonderful things have been happening with the playground project during the past six months. The restroom facilities and the parking lot are both completed. A contract has been awarded to Park and Play Structures for their playground design and equipment that will be included in phase one of the "A Dream Come True" playground. We are so happy to be working with Scott Dubois from Southern Playgrounds for this portion of the playground.

The total cost of the "A Dream Come True" playground has grown to just over a million dollars and we are continuing to work hard to raise funding for the project. It is quite clear now that building the playground in sections is necessary due to the cost of the entire project. The accessibility and inclusiveness of the playground equipment remain our top priorities. The ground surfacing must be accessible and provide an environment that is barrier free for the children.

On Monday, July 13, 2009, we held the official groundbreaking ceremony on the playground site! The weather was beautiful and it was so wonderful to stop for just a moment and realize that very soon playground equipment will begin to appear on the playground site. Representatives from the Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham; past and present City Council; the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation; the Parks and Recreation Commission and the dedicated group of playground volunteers attended the ceremony. We laughed, cried and talked together for about an hour. For the volunteers it was clearly a "pinch me" ceremony! The moment had finally arrived to exhale just a little bit, and then go back to raising money for the next phase.

Thanks for following our story. Remember the story is always and most importantly about the children. There are still children who have not played on a playground; children who only have the opportunity to watch other children play from the side of the playground. We want to change that for the children in the valley. Please be thankful for all children you know and love who are able to play on a playground

and remember those who are waiting for “A Dream Come True” so that they will be able to play on a playground.

Please consider becoming involved with the playground project by telling others what you know and by mailing a small donation to The Community Foundation (see the fundraising page for details).

Additional funds are needed for the following play equipment:

- Playhouses: Weather Station, Fire Station and Ice Cream Parlor
- Table top games to be installed on the tables in Bryce’s Dream Café

Please mail your tax deductible donations to:

*The Community Foundation
Of Harrisonburg and Rockingham
P.O. Box 1068
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22803*

Make checks out to:

The Community Foundation

On the check specify “A Dream Come True” Playground Fund

Please accept our sincere Thank you from the The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham

In the spring of 2007, the “A Dream Come True” playground was very fortunate to become affiliated with The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham.

Please visit the web site for The Community Foundation and learn more about the tremendous services that they are providing to our community.

Individuals are able to make tax-deductible donations to the “A Dream Come True” Playground Fund because of our association with The Community Foundation. We have been truly blessed by the opportunities that this working relationship has presented to the “A Dream Come True” Volunteers.

We encourage you to visit their web site and contact them for more information.

<http://www.the-community-foundation.org>

A special gift idea: make a tax deductible donation to the playground in honor or memory of a special friend or family member. The donation will be used to purchase additional playground equipment.

The Liberty Swing!
Funding is complete!!

Thank you to the community for helping with this very special project.

- The RMH Foundation
 - The Harrisonburg Rotary Club Golf Classic 2011
 - The Community Foundation
 - Community Development Block Grant
 - Individual donations
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“Dreams Really Do Come True”

In 2001, a group of children from Pleasant Valley Elementary shared their dream of swinging on a wheelchair swing. Ten years later, the swing will soon be on its way from Australia to the A Dream Come True Playground.

The Liberty Swing will be installed during late summer or early fall 2011. Check back soon for more details.

Directions

From the North

Take I-81 exit #245 and turn left (East) onto Port Republic Road. Take a left at the third traffic light onto Neff Avenue.

From the South

Take I-81 exit #245 and turn right (East) onto Port Republic Road. Take a left at the third traffic light onto Neff Avenue.

Neff Avenue/Port Republic Road Intersection

This intersection has a CVS, McDonald's, Food Lion and construction.

On your right there will be a grassy area, when you come to the crest of the hill and begin down the other side you will see the playground on the right.

Turn right on Thomas Bowers Circle.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question #1

Does the “A Dream Come True” Playground have a picnic shelter than may be reserved for special events?

YES :)

A brand new beautiful shelter just opened in May 2011 and is ready for families and school groups to make reservations.

Thank you to the City of Harrisonburg for creating such a beautiful facility for playground visitors.
Call the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation (540) 433-9168.

Question #2

Where do I send a donation?

The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham
Attention: "A Dream Come True" Playground Fund
P.O. Box 1068
Harrisonburg, VA 22803

Please make checks payable to "The Community Foundation" and specify "A Dream Come True Playground Fund" in the memo.

All donations made to the "A Dream Come True" Playground Fund through The Community Foundation are tax deductible. You will receive a letter from The Community Foundation, documenting your donation.

Question #3

I think I left something on the playground, what should I do?

Check with the park attendant Phil or call the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation at (540) 433-9168

I found something on the playground, what should I do with it?
Please give it to the park attendant!

Question #4

What is unique about the playground, "A Dream Come True"?

"A Dream Come True" is a playground designed for children with and without disabilities to be able to play together on the same playground. Traditional playground equipment will be intermingled with specialized playground equipment so that all children will be able to enjoy spending an afternoon visiting "A Dream Come True." The playground is both inclusive and accessible.

What is inclusive play? What is accessible play?

Inclusive Play

The idea of inclusive play involves children with disabilities and children without disabilities playing together on the same playground. "A Dream Come True" an Accessible Playground, incorporates play equipment for children with a wide range of ability levels intermingled within the same playground. The objective is for children to be able to play together. It is important for each child to feel included in

playground play. We want to do everything to avoid a child feeling either isolated or completely excluded from playground play.

Accessible Play

The idea of accessible play involves creating a playground that will enable children and adults to get to the play equipment. The paths or routes leading to the playground need to be barrier free. The ADA guidelines are a great place to begin in planning for a playground, but it is important to consider situations that go beyond the basic requirements set by the ADA. The accessibility issue begins from the time the family parks their car until the child is enjoying the playground. The idea of accessible play continues once a child or adult arrives at the playground equipment. It is vital that they are able to play on the equipment.

Contact Us:

Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation

David Wigginton

David.wigginton@harrisonburgva.gov

540-433-9168

www.harrisonburgva.gov

The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham

“A Dream Come True” Playground Fund

PO Box 1068

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22803

540-432-3863

www.the-community-foundation.org

Recognition

Thanks and Recognition!

The “A Dream Come True” Volunteers want to say thank you to the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation for taking on this volunteer project in 2001. Thank you for believing in a group of Girl Scouts and thank you for caring so much about children with many abilities. It has been a true pleasure to work with you and take this nine year journey to build this wonderful playground. Your dedication to the project and commitment to the children of Harrisonburg is absolutely commendable.

RMH Foundation 2011

Thank you for awarding the “A Dream Come True” Playground a grant for \$5,000. This grant funding will be applied to the total cost of a wheelchair swing. The continued support by RMH and the RMH Foundation of the playground is greatly appreciated.

For some children, the wheelchair swing will provide them with the opportunity to experience swinging for the very first time!

Thank you to the RMH Foundation for believing in the children and the playground.



Keister Elementary Third Graders 2007 through 2011

The Mega Scarf Project

The "A Dream Come True" Volunteers want to thank you for all of your hard work and community service for the playground project. Each one of you are truly amazing citizens and we are very proud of you. Thank you for selecting our very special playground to be the focus of your fundraising efforts. You are wonderful and we appreciate you very much! Have a wonderful summer.

The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham

\$5,000 Anonymous Donation

The donation was applied to the cost of the Liberty Wheelchair Swing :) Thank you so very much for the kind and loving generosity of this person. The children who will now be able to swing will be so blessed by each and every donation from the community.

Michael Syptak

Thank you for the beautiful artwork you created for Bryce's Dream Café. The ground surfacing is so vibrant and adds so much creativity to the playground. We appreciate your generous addition to the "A Dream Come True" Playground. Thank you for your volunteer service to the children.

Shenandoah Valley Builders Association and Fine Earth, LLC

Thank you for selecting the "A Dream Come True" Playground to be the recipient of the 2010 Arbor Day gift. The donation of landscaping has made the sensory garden and the playground so beautiful. The children loved the Arbor Day Celebration that was enjoyed in conjunction with the playground Opening Ceremony. It was so much fun to watch the kids pot their seedling trees to take home with them.

The plants and trees have grown so much over the summer and are just beautiful. Thank you so much for choosing to become part of the "A Dream Come True" Playground.

Stone Spring Elementary

Thank you so much for adopting the playground as the focus of your reading project for the 2009-2010 school year. We so much appreciate your generous donation to the playground fund and will apply it to

the games for the table tops in Bryce's Dream Café'. Opening day was a wonderful day and we were honored to have you as our special guests.

WHSV TV-3 / WHSV Children's Weather Station

WHSV TV 3 is sponsoring our WHSV Children's Weather Station; our children's play weather equipment and our professional weather station. The WHSV Children's Weather Station includes an anchor desk, forecast weather board and the children's play weather equipment. The professional weather station will gather accurate weather information and provide educators a way to give their students the opportunity to learn about various aspects of weather.

Plans are in the making to have an educational weather programs presented by one of our WHSV TV 3 meteorologists!

We are so thankful to WHSV TV 3 for choosing to become involved with the

"A Dream Come True" Playground. Sponsoring the WHSV Children's Weather Station and the professional weather equipment has ensured the inclusion of these valuable educational play activities in our playground design.

Harrisonburg Fire Department

Thank you for helping with our Little Fire Station
"Dalmatian Station"

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is donating fire hoses, a fire hydrant, fire hats and boots and a smoke detector or our Little Fire Station. The children are going to have such fun playing both inside and outside this accessible play structure.

The Little Fire Station is one of four accessible inclusive Little Buildings that will provide children the opportunity to use their imaginations and play creatively.

We appreciate the fire department becoming involved with our playground project. When the playground opens we hope to utilize Dalmatian Station for classrooms on field trips to learn about fire safety.

Bridgewater College

Car Wash and Bake Sale

Thank you to the dedicated group of students from Bridgewater College who chose "A Dream Come True" as the focus of their community service project. We appreciate everything volunteers contribute to the playground project and all donations help us to reach our goal of building the playground for the children.

Alcoa and Kawneer

The "A Dream Come True" Volunteers appreciate the Alcoa and Kawneer companies for becoming involved with our community service project. During the winter of 2007, the playground received a \$5,000 grant through the Alcoa Foundation for the "A Dream Come True" Accessible Inclusive Playground!

The generosity and kindness demonstrated by the Alcoa Foundation and the employees of these businesses will make a significant difference in the playground. On behalf of the playground volunteers and the children who will one day play on the "A Dream Come True" playground, please accept our most sincere thanks for extending a helping hand when we needed it the most.

The Alcoa Foundation grant will pay for our Little Fire Station; Dalmatian Station. The Little Fire Station is a wonderful and unique play structure designed just for our playground. It will encourage educational, creative play and with the help of the Harrisonburg Fire Department it will contain many pieces of non-frightening real fire equipment. We want Alcoa and Kawneer to serve as an example of how a business can make a huge difference in the lives of children.

Regal Foundation

Thank you to the Regal Foundation for the \$5,000 grant to be used toward the poured rubber matting on the playground. We appreciate Regal Cinema becoming an important part of the "A Dream Come True" Playground project and making a difference in the success of our volunteer project.



Rockingham Memorial Hospital Foundation

The RMH Foundation has awarded the "A Dream Come True" Playground a grant in the amount of \$5000. We appreciate the support the foundation has shown to our playground project and the children in our community.

The grant funding has been used to purchase a shade sail to provide an area of shaded play on the playground.

Some children need shade due to health conditions and a place out of the sun to cool down when they become overheated.

JMU Student Occupational Therapy Association

Many people supported the 5K run/walk that was sponsored by SOTA during spring semester 2009. The weather was chilly, foggy and drizzling but the enthusiasm was very high! Thank you so much to the students for all of their hard work in preparing such an organized event and for sharing the playground project with the JMU community. The SOTA students have made a significant difference in the lives of children by becoming involved in the "A Dream Come True" playground.

P. Buckley Moss Society

We sincerely thank the P. Buckley Moss Society for their generous donation of the print Summer Splash #12. The print comes from the Society's Charity Print Collection. This fundraising event will be such a wonderful contribution to the "A Dream Come True" Playground project.

Ginny Logan Frame House

The P. Buckley Moss print has been so beautifully framed by Ginny Logan. She generously donated the framing which we greatly appreciate. Thank you Ginny for your kindness and for becoming involved with the "A Dream Come True" Playground project.

