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Moving forward

Brooklyn's
Playground
makes strides
toward goal

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POCATELLO — Fund-raising toward the all-accessible Brooklyn's Playground has reached the \$50,000 mark in just six weeks, according to Jonny Fisher, the project chairman and father of the child who is the project's namesake.

"We've had a tremendous response from business leaders in the community as we've told the story about why Brooklyn's Playground is needed for the Pocatello-Chubbuck community," Fisher said. "With a \$400,000 total cost, we still have some ground to cover, but at this pace, I'm confident we're going to achieve our goal."

Along with the fund-raising efforts, students from 12 area elementary schools participated in a drawing contest. Third-grader Hannah Norton,



from Ellis Elementary School, won the contest for her use of color and the theme of "inclusion" in her depiction of what the playground should look like.

"It's so creative. She's included a list of different people taking part in creative activities," said Michelle Clinger, chairwoman of the children's

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Hannah Norton, 9, a third-grader from Ellis Elementary in Chubbuck, won the poster contest for Brooklyn's Playground.

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committee for Brooklyn's Playground.

Norton said that people in wheelchairs and walkers cannot climb up stairs or across grass on a playground, so she drew a level surface and tables without chairs.

"People that don't have walkers or wheelchairs can walk up stairs and go on swings," the 9-year-old said. "I think it is cool that they would make a playground that (everyone) could do the same things."

Norton's art along with the drawings from each school, will be on display at the Design Day Celebration on Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Wilcox Elementary School, 427 Lark Lane. Leather and Associates Playground Designer Dennis Wille will be there to present a drawing incorporating children's ideas for the playground. People interested in volunteering can sign up at the event.

The 20,000-square-foot playground will be in Chubbuck's OK Ward Park. The playground will be constructed over five days in September with help from about 2,000 volunteers.

Fisher said there has been a positive response from the community, with a number of locals interested in making the project a success

The idea for the playground came from Fisher's daughter, Brooklyn, who was born with spina bifida. After Brooklyn sustained a concussion from a fall from a swing, her parents decided to pursue a playground that would be suited for all children.

A community event, "Brooklyn's Winter Picnic for the Park," will be Feb. 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Don Aslett's Museum of Clean. Admission is \$15 for a family, \$5 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under. For more information visit brooklynsplayground.org.

“People are surprised, first of all, at how many kids in the area have an ADA-recognized disability,” Fisher said. “When we explain how Brooklyn’s Playground will be a place that is designed for all kids — both those with disabilities and those without — the light just seems to go on immediately. We haven’t had a single person think this is a bad idea, and everyone wants to know how they can help.”