

# Proposed all-access playground gets large donations

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POCATELLO — Jonny Fisher couldn't see the amount printed on the oversized check when the J.R. Simplot Co. officials unveiled their sizable donation to the Brooklyn's Playground fund during a Thursday Pocatello Rotary Club luncheon.



Brooklyn Fisher

Based on the gasps among the crowd, however, Fisher knew it had to be a big number. See *Playground*, A5

## Playground

Continued from A1

During the luncheon, a pair of large donations brought the community-wide volunteer effort to build a fully inclusive playground at OK Ward Park to near the halfway point. A moment after Bang's Office Products owner Dorsey Hill presented a check for \$10,500 toward the cause, the J.R. Simplot Foundation made a \$25,000 donation.

Fisher and his wife Melissa have spearheaded the playground effort, named for their 5-year-old daughter, Brooklyn, who has spina bifida. The fundraising total now stands at more than \$150,000 toward a \$400,000 project. The goal of organizers is to complete fundraising in time to start building the week of Sept. 19.

Jonny Fisher explained the playground will have a wheel chair-accessible ground sur-



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Brooklyn Fisher, center, and her parents Melissa and Jonny, left, accept donations totaling \$35,000 for Brooklyn's Playground at Thursday's Rotary Club meeting. For video from this story, go to [idahostatejournal.com](http://idahostatejournal.com).

face, which will cost about \$100,000 to install. It will also have specialized swings, double-wide ramps and other features designed to assist children with disabilities. Alcoves are planned for

children who become over-stimulated and need a place to calm down.

Jonny Fisher acknowledges the facility is ideal for children with disabilities and that Brooklyn can't wait for

the grand opening. He also believes it will prove invaluable for able-bodied children.

"By being able to play with them, (able-bodied children) will be able to ask questions and get answers, and it'll become a normal thing to them. They won't look at the disability. They'll look at the child," he said.

Among the Simplot officials in attendance was Martin Hunt, the company's vice president of mining and manufacturing at the Boise office.

"We do consider our communities part of our family," Hunt said. "This was certainly one (project) for the Portneuf Valley area we thought was a very worthy cause."

Hill described assisting with the fundraising as "one of my exciting ventures that I'm involved with."

"It just gives me goose bumps because this is such a wonderful program," Hill said. "You should see this playground. ... It's going to be unbelievable."