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An exciting community project is taking place in Bannock County! Through a “grassroots” effort, the citizens of Pocatello and Chubbuck are joining hands to provide a state-of-the-art playground where all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can play together side-by-side. What makes this project unique is that the process of selecting the design and features is a community-wide effort that engages students, local artists, historians, parents and professionals to help create a customized playground best tailored to our area's needs. The entire community will help with the fundraising and supply the labor to build the playground in *only* five days in September, 2011!

Need

Play is a child's work. All children learn, grow, and develop through play; improving their physical, cognitive, and social skills. Nowhere is this more evident than the neighborhood playground. Children with special needs may benefit to a greater degree from playground activities, since their disabilities might have kept them from developing the social and physical skills often learned in informal play environments. These skills are important because they influence the extent to which children will be integrated socially and vocationally.

According to the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District, 11% of their students have a disability as defined by the American with Disabilities Act. This means that nearly 3,000 children with disabilities live in the Portneuf Valley with limited opportunity to enjoy the benefits of inclusive play with their peers. One of these children is Brooklyn, who was born with spina bifida and has limited use of her legs. Brooklyn’s parents, Jonny and Melissa Fisher, envision a playground that would fill these needs. This dream is on its way to being realized with the plans for Brooklyn’s Playground.

The American with Disabilities Act requires that children’s playgrounds meet minimal physical accessibility guidelines. Meeting these standards allows some children with mobility disabilities to access some of the equipment. Removing physical barriers does not, however, remove social barriers. In addition, some of the physical accessibility features such as transfer stations may actually limit these children even further, as they have to leave their wheelchairs which are their means of independent mobility.

Project

Brooklyn’s Playground will be a special playground designed to provide opportunities for children of all abilities to experience sensory-rich play. It will be filled with fun, creative playground equipment that will foster learning through imaginative play. All children can play together with their peers, neighbors, and family without encountering physical barriers to access or social barriers to inclusion. Families from all over Portneuf Valley will have the opportunity to visit an incredible playground where children of all abilities can enjoy shoulder-to-shoulder play.

The playground will be located at O.K. Ward Park; an ideal location for such a project. Located on the border between Chubbuck and Pocatello, and open for community use at no charge, Brooklyn’s Playground will be available to families from all over the Portneuf Valley. O. K. Ward Park is one of the valley’s premier parks and has handicap accessible restrooms, a double pavilion and ample accessible parking. The playground area will occupy nearly 20,000 square feet, and adjoining parkland with picnic tables, green space, and shaded benches will create an atmosphere the whole family can enjoy. Brooklyn’s Playground will be built in less than a week entirely by volunteers.

This project is being spearheaded by Portneuf Valley Pride, an all-volunteer group working in partnership with the United Way of Southeastern Idaho.



Accessibility

What comes to your mind when you think of an accessible playground? The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) only specifies that a small number of play components be on an accessible route (wood fiber qualifies as an accessible surface). According to its standards, a slide is considered accessible if you can get a wheelchair to the bottom of the stairs going up, and to the end of the slide. But that child in a wheelchair is missing the best part! We don't think that's enough. Brooklyn's Playground will be a large play environment that is shoulder-to-shoulder accessible for people of all abilities. A playground designer and accessibility expert will help us design a superstructure that is 100 percent accessible for both ground-level and elevated components.

Imagine yourself in a wheelchair (or think of those who don't have to imagine it). In Brooklyn's Playground, you have access to all of the ground-level play components thanks to a poured-in-place rubber surfacing made from recycled tires. You can take your chair up the ramps to the top where there are transfer points for easy access to the slides. Along the way, you find interactive panels, games, climbers, and a phone system – finally, a playground that you can fully enjoy with all your friends. Brooklyn's Playground will also include cooperative games, accessible music areas, sensory panels, and handrails designed to include those children who may have a disability but are not confined to a wheelchair.

While 100 percent access is a highlight of Brooklyn's Playground, this project is about so much more than a playground that caters to people with disabilities – it's about creating an inclusive environment that all children and families will be drawn to visit. Children with disabilities and those without will be able to interact without physical or social barriers. Parents and grandparents will be able to enjoy the playground with their children and grandchildren even if they have limited mobility. We envision a playground that impacts the entire community and will serve generations of Portneuf Valley residents.

Volunteerism

In the fall of 2011, thousands of volunteers will come together on an empty piece of land and, in less than a week, build the best playground in the Portneuf Valley. This project will engage at least 2,000 volunteers, though volunteer-built projects of similar size have seen as many as 3,500 volunteers. The volunteer-built nature of this project increases its value to 2 to 3 times its cost. However, the worth of the playground is in more than the finished product. It lies in the process of thousands of volunteers joining together to bring a necessary playground to our area. Over the weeklong build, connections are made that would otherwise never have been possible, and lasting friendships are formed. The community's pride in a project that they built with their own hands results in better care and more family visits.

This is no ordinary park – its size, quality, and accessibility make it unique. However, while the playground is truly an amazing structure, the volunteerism that will build it is probably the most impressive part of the process. Several people who have coordinated similar projects speak in awe about community involvement and the way that each volunteer feels a sense of ownership in the project. Each leaves with a real appreciation for what volunteerism can do in a community. Families who helped build will return for picnics and bring out-of-town guests to show them what their community accomplished working together. Portneuf Valley organizations, businesses, and thousands of residents are coming together to make this playground a reality. Thanks to the volunteer spirit in our community, this project worth well over a million dollars can be built for less than half that amount.



Quick Fact Sheet

The need for a playground

- Play is a child's work; children learn, grow, and develop through play.
- 11 percent of the 22,285 children in Portneuf Valley have a disability, but they have limited opportunity to enjoy the benefits of inclusive play.
- Children with special needs can benefit even more from playground activities.
- Today's children and families are spending less and less time outdoors, and more time planted in front of electronics.

The project

- Brooklyn's Playground will be a fully-inclusive playground.
- It will be a fun destination environment, and a draw to children and families that will provide opportunity for hours of the active and imaginative play that our children need.
- There will be a poured-in-place rubber surfacing.
- Brooklyn's Playground will also include cooperative games, accessible music areas, sensory panels and handrails designed to include those children who may have a disability but are not confined to a wheelchair.
- The playground will be built from durable recycled plastics and composite lumber.
- This quality structure will need minimal upkeep.
- Local artists and craftspeople will be invited to participate, adding a unique Portneuf Valley feel to the playground.

Who will it benefit?

- Children of all ages, with and without disabilities.
- Families.
- Parents and grandparents who have limited mobility or other disabilities.
- The entire community of the Portneuf Valley.

Process

- Design Day – a professional playground designer will meet with local schoolchildren to gather ideas for the new playground. He will incorporate those ideas into the unique design of Brooklyn's Playground.
- Organization Phase – fundraising, generating public awareness, and signing up volunteers to help build.
- Build Week – In the space of a few days, professional consultants will work on site with a small army of enthusiastic volunteers of various skill levels to transform an empty patch of ground into something magnificent: our own community-designed and community-built playground.

The Project Champions

- Brooklyn's Playground is a project of Valley Pride.
- United Way of SEI is serving as the fiscal agent and contributions are tax deductible.
- The city governments of Pocatello and Chubbuck have both endorsed this project.

We are counting on you to help make Brooklyn's dream come true. Please make a contribution today.



Budget

Structural Plastic	\$80,000
Beams, posts, and supports; these are made from recycled plastics and provide the structural support for the play equipment.	
Decking	\$40,000
A recycled wood/plastic composite provides decking on play structures and maze cubes and is used to build accessible ramps.	
Hardware	\$5,000
Nails, screws, bolts, nuts, washers, fasteners, etc.	
Equipment	\$35,000
Pre-manufactured play equipment such as slides, swings, climbers, monkey bars, rubber bridges, spring toys, sand digger, etc.	
Tools	\$4,000
Drill bits, drivers, saw blades, etc. All power tools and heavy equipment will be borrowed from the community or donated.	
Accessible Surfacing	\$130,000
This is a rubber surfacing that is necessary for true accessibility on the playground. It is a very durable material made from recycled tires and provides access to play equipment for people with limited mobility as well as a safe impact surface in case of falls.	
Other Construction Materials	\$25,000
Various other necessary construction supplies (e.g. cement, wood, sandpaper, paint, gloves, masks, pens, quick drying concrete, sand, gravel, tarps, stain, etc.)	
Design and Consulting	\$26,000
Professional fees for design, design development, consulting, and organization.	
Construction Fees	\$20,000
Fees for professional construction consultants to guide the volunteer building process and inspect playground for safety.	
Administrative & Travel	\$15,000
Fundraising expenses, travel, and administrative expenses.	
Shipping and Incidental	\$20,000
Cost of shipping for all materials, as well as incidental costs incurred during construction and a tool replacement contingency.	
Total	\$400,000

(This budget is representative of similar projects. The final budget is dependent on the Design Day approved plan.)



Valley Pride

Brooklyn's Playground is a project of Portneuf Valley Pride, an organization dedicated to increasing the growth, opportunity, harmony, beauty, and overall environment of our local area. It is a coalition of service, business, educational, and governmental organizations who together with individuals make great things happen in the Portneuf Valley.

Vision Statement

To create in the Portneuf Valley a living environment where pride, enrichment of growth and opportunity, harmony, beauty, and service is fostered and sustained.

Mission Statement

The Importance of One and the Power of Many

Goal

To bring together people from throughout the Portneuf Valley, including from churches, city and county government, schools, service clubs, private and public agencies, neighborhoods, and individual citizens, with the common goal of making our community a more beautiful and better place for all who live here. The effort will be driven by a shared vision and master plan, education and awareness of needs and opportunities, support of enforcement of city and county codes, and engaging citizens in service that meets our mission. Valley Pride will provide a mechanism whereby projects that are beyond the capabilities of a single service group can be planned, staffed, and executed.

Fiscal Agent

Valley Pride has applied to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status. United Way of Southeastern Idaho will serve as the fiscal agent until Valley Pride receives approval of its nonprofit application. Valley Pride has partnered with United Way because of its long history in the Portneuf Valley and the alignment of the missions of the two organizations. United Way was founded as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1958. The mission of United Way of Southeastern Idaho is to improve lives in Southeastern Idaho by motivating the community's passion, resources, and caring.

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