

New playgrounds designed for all

By Lauren Weber The Press-Tribune



courtesy

The hollow log ride is one of the features at the new universally accessible playgrounds planned for the Maidu, Royer and Mahany regional parks. The playgrounds will fit the special needs of children with disabilities.



John Johnson said. "They've put on programs and activities that absolutely encompass all the people in the community."

And the three parks seemed to fit into the Lions Club mission.

"Shane's park looked like a great project to help out on," said John Massey, president of Rotary Club Roseville Sunrise. "Everybody in our club felt it was a very worthy cause."

The money was raised through one of the Lions Club's annual crab feeds, which was held Feb. 23 with more than 600 attendees.

Jeff Dubchansky, Roseville's assistant director of parks and recreation, said the check from the Lions and Rotary clubs is the largest donation from community service clubs for the parks to date. The city's goal is to raise \$1 million through donations for funding the parks, Dubchansky said.

"We're in the design development state," he said. "Eventually the city will have three universally accessible playgrounds."

The existing Maidu and Royer parks will be upgraded and remodeled to include Shane's Inspiration standards, whereas Mahany Regional Park will include a brand new playground.

"I think as our area is growing and we are becoming a bit more urbanized, there is a need in the community," Dubchansky said. "It's going to be different than anything we've ever built."

Every park must comply with ADA requirements but that still limits park use for children in wheelchairs and with other disabilities. The new playgrounds will be "truly accessible," Dubchansky said.

Swaying back and forth on the swing, slipping down the slide and climbing the jungle gym could be considered a child's rite of passage. But for children with disabilities, some playground facilities are not accessible.

In order to make playgrounds hospitable for all children, the city of Roseville is in the process of designing three parks that will fit the special needs of children with disabilities.

The universally accessible playgrounds are slated for Maidu, Royer and Mahany regional parks in Roseville and will be designed by Shane's Inspiration, a nonprofit organization dedicated to build playgrounds that cater to the special needs of children with disabilities.

With donations from businesses and organizations, the park funding is underway. The Roseville Host Lions Club and Rotary Club of Roseville Sunrise recently presented the city with a check in the amount of \$10,000 toward the funding of the three parks.

"Roseville's Host Lions Club has been in the community for over 80 years," Lions Club president

Flooring will consist of concrete or rubber flooring allowing children and parents in wheelchairs more access. At Mahany Regional Park there will be raised sand tables and high-back swings. Rubber surfaces for softer landings for the hollow log slide and under the net climber and a raised sensory garden will help make the park safe for all children.

Laurie Newton, a Roseville resident, helped introduce the city to Shane's Inspiration playgrounds while researching playgrounds for her own backyard. Newton's 13-year-old son has a rare syndrome and she knows how important playgrounds are for a child's growth.

"It opens a whole new adventure to them," she said.

Something that attracted Newton to the universally accessible playgrounds was the learning aspect.

"It has the educational component that just struck my heart," she said. "It's so important to bridge the gap between able and disabled children."

When Newton came across the city of Folsom's plans for a Shane's Inspiration playground, she was introduced to another Roseville woman who was trying to bring the parks to Roseville.

"We put our minds together and worked together," Newton said of her collaboration with Jackie De Muth.

De Muth's introduction to Shane's Inspiration was similar to Newton's.

"It started with a swing," she said.

She was searching for a swing for her granddaughter who is confined to a wheelchair – something that they could buy, build or adapt to her needs. The price was too high for them, but De Muth became interested in the playgrounds.

Attending a Folsom park event, she was introduced to Newton and left with a whole new outlook.

"We need a whole playground," she said.

From there the mission began.

"Everybody just wants to be involved," she said. "It's just the right thing to do."

This year, all proceeds from the 12th annual Mayor's Cup golf tournament will benefit Roseville's Shane's Inspiration project. The tournament will be held May 9 at Woodcreek Golf Club.

Donations for the park project can be sent to Roseville Shane's Inspiration, city of Roseville, Community Services Department, 311 Vernon St., Roseville, CA 95678.