

Butler County Parks and Recreation Special Kids Zone

Butler County, PA

P roject Description:

In the spring of 2002 the Butler County Parks and Recreation Department was contacted by Mr. Richard Musko, President of the A.M. Rotary Club of Butler, regarding the development of a fully accessible playground within the county as part of its commitment to a community service project.

The Butler County commissioners quickly agreed to support the worthwhile project and the work began on planning what turned out to be a very special place for children. A committee of professionals who deal with children with special needs daily, such as the Intermediate Unit, United Cerebral Palsy Association, Butler County Children Center, United Way and the Parks and Recreation Department worked closely with the Rotary on every aspect of design of the playground. After two months of planning, equipment was ordered and construction began.

Four months later, the newest addition to Alameda Park was ready to open its doors. The Rotary, along with the County Board of Commissioners, unveiled Phase I of the Special Kids Zone Playground to the public on October 31, 2002.

Developing and building such a specialized playground is not an inexpensive endeavor. The final cost of Phase I and Phase II cost approximately \$500,000. Phase I was completed with an approximate cost of \$170,000.



In 2004 the Butler County Parks and Recreation applied to DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Program for \$100,000 for Phase II of the project. They received \$50,000 through the Keystone Fund between 2004 and 2006. This \$50,000 was a small part of the \$500,000 total project of Phase I and Phase II. Many

partnerships were developed to raise the funds necessary and the workers and equipment to complete the project. Currently both phases are complete. Phase II consisted of the purchase of additional equipment, installation of concrete for safety surface base, and purchase and installation of poured in place rubber safety surface.

Some of the partnerships that were developed were in cash donations from the A.M. Rotary Club, P.M. Rotary Club and the County of Butler. Donated Services were provided for

"This project has been fantastic for the County. This facility provides for a group of families that have been under served for years. Individual people and groups/organizations come from throughout the County and the Region because of the accessible play area and also that the Community Pool is also ADA compliant, which was also funded with DCNR grant program funds. They have the opportunity to utilize both facilities because of their accessibility. There are not many such facilities in the area. Community groups and organizations utilize the facility on regular bases, such as the YMCA and the Community Care Connection, formally called United Cerebral Palsy Organization."

*Gary Pinkerton, Director,
 Butler County Parks
 and Recreation*





design from Grey-Warnick Engineering, Labor donations were received from Musko & Associates, Conley Resort, Home Depot, A.M. Rotary and County of Butler. Additionally, equipment donations were provided by Sam Zurzolo and the County of Butler.

With this Special Kids Zone completed many of the organizations mentioned previously who were involved

in the development of the design of the play area, currently utilize and visit the play area on a daily bases. They bring their children to the zone and provide them with the opportunity to play in an area that is sensitive and appropriate to their needs.

Amount of funds awarded, year and matching sources:

2004-2006: \$50,000 Keystone funding
 Matching funds P.M. Rotary (\$44,000)
 A.M. Rotary (\$10,000)
 Butler County (\$80,000)
 Labor/Equipment Donations (\$66,000)
