

Kids Help Landscape Architects Plan a Park

A public playground at Country-side Park is one step closer to development now that a local landscape architecture firm is volunteering its time and getting kids involved.

Eric Sauer, Gary Sierschula and their staff at Envision-Works, Inc. are donating their time and expertise to help develop a plan for the playground by the end of summer.

To gather ideas, Sauer met with kids at the Washington Township Recreation Center during the spring and early summer. Participants in the after-school program and summer camp were invited to present their ideas and try their hand at drawing their own designs.

"The new playground is intended to increase spontaneous play opportunities for all children in our community," said Senior Recreation Supervisor Linda

Madden who is overseeing the project. "Eric's generosity takes us one step closer to making this transformation a reality. With his help, the park will blend beautifully with the natural environment."

The project will transform and expand the existing play area into a 4,000-square foot playground that mirrors its natural surroundings and incorporates a butterfly theme. The handicapped-accessible play area will provide creative spaces, nature education, and physically challenging equipment.

The idea of incorporating butterflies was inspired by Yukta Garg, a six-year-old girl who died in a tragic July 2006 car accident as she was leaving a recreation center camp. In keeping with Yukta's love of performing, a creative arts area will include a butterfly stage, sound structures and art panels.

Washington Township Trustees have approved \$50,000 in seed money for the playground which is located just southeast of the Washington Township Recreation Center at 895 Miamisburg-Centerville Rd. Yukta's parents, Hemant and Arti Garg, have been helping to raise

Landscape architect Eric Sauer works with kids at summer camp to develop a playground design.

funds over the past two years. Money that has been raised so far will pay for the first phase of the playground project, however more is needed, said Madden.

Sierschula and Sauer, two native Daytonians, started Envision-Works to provide design and site planning services that were high quality and affordable, professional and sustainable. The nine-year-old firm has a staff of five landscape architects who have provided design services for hundreds of municipal, institutional, commercial, private and residential clients throughout the Miami Valley and southwestern Ohio.

How You Can Help

A playground plan and the first phase of the Butterfly Playground Project are being funded with Washington Township seed money and donations.

However, the township is looking for other companies and individuals who are interested in donating their services, time or financial support to complete the project. For information on how you or your company can participate, call Linda Madden at 438-7985.

Trustees Host Neighborly Meetings

Township Trustees extend their thanks to the many residents who participated in a series of Neighborhood Nights during May and June.

"We enjoyed meeting people from each of our township neighborhoods. It allowed us to focus on the interests and issues of residents in a particular area," said Trustee President Lee Snyder.

As part of Neighborhood Nights, trustees hosted residents from a different quadrant at each meeting. Residents were invited to a pre-meeting reception with refreshments and second graders representing each school in the quadrant were asked to open the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

"Residents always are welcome to attend Trustee meetings and comment on issues of importance to them. However, Neighborhood Night encouraged even more participation," Snyder said.

Second graders from Cline and Ida Weller elementary schools greet (left to right) Trustee Joyce Young, Trustee Dale Berry, and Township Administrator Jesse Lightle.