



Where Dreams Are Never Disabled

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Coming in 2007!

Squeals of delight...whoops of joy... the happy sounds of children playing.



You'll hear them all at the special Can-Do Playground at the new Alapocas Run State Park, a part of the Blue Ball project. Meanwhile, Rotarians from throughout the Wilmington area and beyond will smile with pleasure at the project they conceived and created.

The much-anticipated Can-Do Playground, designed for children of all abilities, including those in wheelchairs or with other physical, developmental, cognitive and/or sensory disabilities, is on schedule to open by summer 2007. The first of its kind in Delaware, the public playground will occupy 23,000 square feet on the east side of Route 202 just off Weldin Road. Its original 2005 opening was postponed for safety concerns due to revisions in the construction schedule of these major roadways and state park.

The Can-Do spirit of the Rotary project team that has planned, designed, raised funds and involved community participation to create this playground continues unabated, says Thomas A. Talley. He is chairman of a nonprofit corporation formed by the six Wilmington-area Rotary Clubs: Brandywine, Brandywine Hundred, Caesar Rodney, Naamans, Wilmington and Wilmington West. They have worked closely with DNREC, DeIDOT, a variety of organizations and the community at large.

Construction Update

Rotarians watch construction progress on the Route 202, Foulk Road and Weldin Road intersections with special interest, eager to see the Can Do Playground open.

Everyone driving from Route 141 to I-95 sees not only roadwork, bridge construction and work on the new connector, the 141 Spur, but also the progress in rehabilitating the Blue Ball Dairy Barn. The Interstate sign posts are in place and dates for switching traffic back to 202 have been discussed.



Dairy Barn Renovation

Bob King, of DeIDOT, says the next steps will involve closing the Weldin Road intersection for improvements, an area of particular interest because of its proximity to the playground site.

King heard comments from Rotarians at a public workshop on November 17th at Brandywine High School. Written comments are also welcome. To express views in support or opposition to DeIDOT plans, you may speak at the workshop or send your comments in writing to DeIDOT Public Relations, P.O. Box 778, Dover, DE 19903.

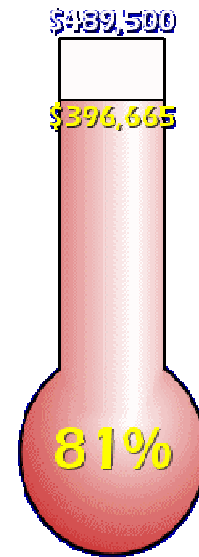
Funds Raised Reach 81% of Goal

The Can Do Playground project has reached 81% of its fundraising goal, reports Hughlett Kirby, chair of the fundraising committee. "Thanks to the generosity of many in this community, we have raised \$396,665 of the \$489,500 needed to build this public playground for children of all abilities", she says. Kirby praises the generosity of foundations, which have been very generous, with \$200,000 contributed from 12 of them. Half of these funds came from the Longwood Foundation. The Christmas Shop Foundation awarded one of its 2004 signature gifts of \$15,000, one of the largest they have ever given.

"The six Wilmington Area Rotary Clubs, and Rotarians in general, have been enormously generous," Kirby says. "Without their leadership the project would not succeed; but they have clearly given where their heart leads, as well." Among the sources for the total Rotary contributions of \$108,753 is a \$7,500 District Simplified Grant from Rotary District 7630 and \$101,253 from individual Rotarians, plus Rotary Club fundraisers of all kinds, from Holiday Party silent auctions to Texas Hold-'em Poker Games.

Thanks to Rich Kolodgie's leadership and to his Rotarian fundraising team, local corporations have contributed \$33,000. This effort was led by Astra Zeneca, which gave over \$8,000 from many different pockets. They supported the project with a corporate gift, gave more from an executive fund, contributed the admission proceeds from an employee Charity Fair, and even provided an opportunity to raise money at the DE Smash Tennis Tournament, which they sponsored. Leadership has also come from Raymond James & Associates, Inc., which supported their employee, and Can Do President, Tom Talley, with a \$6,000 contribution. Blenheim Homes made it possible for the fund to receive over \$5,000 by contributing a Gift Certificate for a Cruise, which was raffled off.

Individuals have also made terrific contributions. One Rotarian's young son asked his friends and family for money for the playground in lieu of birthday presents, and raised \$400. The students at Immaculate Heart of Mary gave almost that much. Contributions came from anonymous sources, predictable sources, and from neighbors and friends from near and far. "Their generosity has exceeded our expectations, and been remarkable," says Kirby. "It humbles us that so many people care enough to get involved and to participate. I believe I can speak for all of us on the committee when I say that this project makes us proud to be Rotarians. We know that we make a difference in this world, not just for children with disabilities; but for us all."



Your Help Is Needed

Before construction begins, we need to raise the remaining \$92,835. The last dollars are always the hardest to raise, so new ideas and suggestions are encouraged and welcomed. Please don't stop giving now. Your contributions are needed to bring this fundraising campaign to a successful completion.
