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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Project Playground Sets Build Day in Creswell on Jan. 27

Volunteers sought to help with construction.

CRESWELL, OR —With a little help from the community, and a lot of help from the weather, the moms of Project Playground hope to see a new playground in place for Creswell’s kids by spring.

The small group of committed parents began in May 2004 with the dream of bringing more play opportunities to their growing community. Because the city didn’t yet have a budget in place for recreation, the group decided to strike out on their own. With the city’s blessing, these four moms proceeded to raise more than \$75,000 toward the purchase of new playground equipment for Holt Park.

The new vision removes much of the old, out-dated equipment in the park and replaces it with a modern play structure with elements for kids of all ages, as well as a state-of-the-art playnet, a climbing wall, a tire swing, a four-seat teeter-totter, a two-car climbing train for toddlers, and safer new tot swings.

“We learned more about play than we ever thought we’d want to know,” laughs Deb Jolda, who started the project with Juli McLennan, Monica Marquess, and Heidi Wegand—who have seven children between them. “Intuitively, we knew how much our children got out of the play equipment we visited in other neighboring cities. We could see their confidence levels rise, how much they learned from interactions with other kids, and how much they gained physically from the challenges that were presented. As parents, we didn’t need to read studies about how important ‘play’ was. We could see it.”

And in the process, they learned how to build budgets, how to write grants, and how to plan fundraisers. For example, from a humble pie auction to start the process, the group successfully planned and executed Creswell’s Run for the Park fundraiser two years in a row, raising nearly \$20,000 from the two events. The group hopes the event will continue to raise money for Creswell’s kids through a local runners group, with sponsorship from the Creswell Kiwanis Club.

“It’s almost hard to believe that it’s really happening,” says Jolda, who says she has never done anything like this before. “And it all came from a day in the park when we looked around and say, ‘Wow, somebody needs to do something.’ It turned out that somebody was us.”

The group credits Creswell activist Marge Williamson for the inspiration and drive to move forward with the vision. “Marge’s passion ignites all of us to step outside of our own little worlds. Be careful what you say around her. You might be embarking on an adventure,” says Jolda with a smile.

Jolda says the goal of playgrounds in every neighborhood has been building steadily through the years. “We need to provide our kids with some real alternatives to video games, TV, and iPods. Physical and imaginative play ultimately helps kids learn in school, too.”

Visit home.centurytel.net/playground for more information, email playground@centurytel.net, or call 895-5609.

Project **PLAYGROUND** Creswell Parents Making a Difference



Info Box:

Build Day: Saturday, Jan. 27

Volunteers Needed: 20-30, experience preferred

Donations Needed: Playground-grade wood chips; concrete to pour; concrete pavers; treated timbers; fill dirt

Contact: 895-5609 or playground@centurytel.net

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