

# Project PLAYGROUND

Creswell Parents Making a Difference



## Our Mission

*To help Holt Park reach its potential as a gathering place for families by adding challenging and fun new playground equipment and improving the safety and accessibility of play activities.*

**What and where is Holt Park?** Holt Memorial Park, located in downtown Creswell, was named for Harry Holt, founder of Holt International Adoption Agency. It serves as a gathering place for thousands of area families during Creswell's large events, including the annual Fourth of July picnic festivities and the Day on the Green car show. The two-acre park has grass, trees, basketball and tennis courts, and a great deal of potential.

**Why does the park need new equipment?** The equipment at Holt Park, some of which is 50 years old, is limited in scope—two slides, some swings, a merry-go-round, and miscellaneous odds and ends of equipment. It is unsafe by modern safety standards and not at all accessible to the physically challenged. The only other playgrounds in town are at the schools and are only available after school hours. The next closest playgrounds are in Eugene and Cottage Grove, 10 miles away. With census figures showing children under 14 representing more than a quarter of the population—a figure we believe is rising as young families continue to flock to Creswell—we *feel we can, and must, do better for our children.*

**Why are playgrounds so important?** An increasing body of research underscores the value of playgrounds in contributing to children's physical and mental health. Through play experiences, children gain information about themselves, their bodies, their peers, and their environment. A child's self-esteem is established at an early age, and mastering challenging playground activities can be empowering. Playgrounds offer children the opportunity to learn social skills and lessons. Research shows links between outdoor play and learning skills.

Perhaps most importantly, it is vital to establish healthy patterns of activity among young children—inactive children grow into inactive adults! It's no secret that children spend too much time in front of computers, video games, and TVs, and research shows that obesity among children is a national epidemic. Type II diabetes is also on the rise, related to obesity.

*But we don't need a panel of experts to know that kids need to play. We need to provide a real alternative to combat the powerful pull of TV and video games. We need to give these kids and their families something to do, a place to go, that's right in their neighborhood.*

**What do we propose to do?** Our immediate plans are to remove the outdated equipment, add modern structures and play elements for children of all ages, and improve accessibility and safety. The project will likely be completed in phases, depending on funding availability. What we are calling Phase I would consist of a structure designed for 2- to 5-year-olds and some stand-alone equipment for all ages. Phase II would be a climbing structure for older kids, such as the SpaceNet from Landscape Structures. If funding permits, Phase III park improvements might include more picnic tables, benches, bike racks, and some other creative play opportunities.

**What have we accomplished so far?** Our core group of committed parents has already accomplished several key goals:

- ◆ After careful reflection, research, and discussion with community members and kids, we have selected a baseline of fun and challenging new equipment appropriate for a broad range of ages and abilities, based on what we believe to be an attainable budget.
- ◆ We have developed a plan for an appropriate layout that has been accepted by city officials and other groups who use the park.
- ◆ Once the budget and vision were determined, we began fundraising efforts, through local fundraising, solicitation of corporate donation and pursuit of grant opportunities. (Several grant applications are in progress, and more are in the works.)
- ◆ We expect to refine the vision, especially with regard to improved accessibility for physically challenged children, through community outreach and further research as the project progresses, arriving at very specific needs to be addressed. *We are very open to all suggestions and comments.*

**How much do we need to raise?** We have arrived at an estimated budget of \$60,000 to be sure to cover Phases I and II of the project. Additional money received will go toward Phase III improvements.

**Where will we get our money from?** Although the city leaders understand this need to improve recreational opportunities for its youth, the city currently has no budget for funding such a project. Our group is focusing on raising the needed funds through community and corporate donations, grants, and in-kind donations.

**What have we raised so far?** We feel we have the full support of the city of Creswell and the community. To date, with three fundraising events in the works, we have raised nearly \$7,470 in direct community donations, goods valued at \$1,107 have been contributed, donated raffles items valued at about \$5,000 have been pledged, and in-kind Build Day materials and services valued at about \$8,250 have been pledged.

**How can you help?** Direct contributions are more than welcome. Currently, we are seeking two title sponsors for our upcoming Run for the Park event. We have partnered with the city of Creswell to allow contributions to be tax-deductible. Smaller donations and in-kind pledges of materials and services are also welcome, and we will need plenty of hands on deck on the day of installation, which will be a community effort.

*Please get in touch with us to see how we can work together on this effort!*

**Who are we and how can you reach us?** The committee comprises Juli McLennan, Chair; Deb Jolda, Co-Chair/Secretary; Monica Marquess, Treasurer; and Heidi Wegand, Fundraising Captain. You can contact Juli at (541) 895-3089, Deb at (541) 895-5609, or e-mail any of us at [playground@centurytel.net](mailto:playground@centurytel.net). We have a website at <http://home.centurytel.net/playground>, and we have also registered at <http://planner.kaboom.org/CreswellPlayground>, an organization that offers resources for community-built playground projects.

**Thanks so much for your support!**