

November, 2015

A MONTHLY MESSAGE
FROM



**MAYOR
TODD GOTTEL**



City of Rowlett
4000 Main Street
Rowlett, TX 75088

972-412-6100
www.rowlett.com

Kids Kingdom a Playground Built by our Community!

My fellow Rowlett citizens,

My passion for the quality of life amenities in our City is no secret. I feel that a great community has something to offer every citizen, at every stage of life. Among the most important of those amenities are opportunities for our children to get outside and play! That's why I am SO excited that, after years of planning and fundraising, it's time to build the new and improved Kids Kingdom community playground. The Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department, along with the Parks Advisory Board and the Playground Committee, have spent the last almost two years exhaustively researching, planning and fundraising for this amazing new structure. And now the time is here for our community to BUILD the new Kids Kingdom, right back in its original spot: nestled in the trees at Pecan Grove Park.

The new, 20,000 square foot facility will be a playground for this and future generations to come, designed using up-to-the-minute technology and safe, sustainable materials, accessible for children of all abilities and age groups. The \$750,000 cost to build it reflects that commitment, so along with the original \$100,000 budgeted, the City Council made the decision to include \$557,500 in May's successful CIP Bond Election package. Donations from citizens and businesses have also funded some very special features as well!

Folks, this is truly a community project, tirelessly planned and promoted by those volunteering their time by serving on the Parks Advisory Board and the Playground Committee. It has been designed by our community's children, has been funded by our community through our votes and donations, and now will be physically constructed by those in our community willing to volunteer their enthusiasm, expertise and experience. And here's a little bonus incentive...volunteer your time and your child or grandchild will be among the first to play on Kids Kingdom during the ribbon-cutting party!

Build Week is December 1 – 6!!!

Stories are still told about the original Kids Kingdom build process and friendships made have lasted over 20 years. I know some parents from the original build are eagerly anticipating playing with their grandchildren on the new Kids Kingdom. I hope you'll join us by volunteering YOUR time and skills to build this playground and bring Kids Kingdom back to Rowlett!

Regards,

Mayor Todd Gottel



**Kids Kingdom
Groundbreaking Party on
Saturday, October 17.**



A Little History...

As you may remember, the original playground, funded through donations and built by community volunteers in 1997, was removed in 2013 after serious safety hazards were determined during the national playground inspection process. The structure included lumber treated with Chromate Copper Arsenate (CCA), which contains arsenic. When the playground was erected by the community, CCA was an approved building material but was banned by the Federal Government in 2003 for use in playground materials. Given the cost of the repairs required to make Kids Kingdom safe for the community, which would have included removing the structure, replacing the soil and rebuilding the structure utilizing current safety standards, the decision was made to dismantle this structure.

Kids Kingdom Rebuild Planning...

At that time, the City Council recognized the history and significance of Kids Kingdom to our community and pledged \$100,000 toward its replacement with a safer and more sustainable structure. These Kids Kingdom-type playgrounds were very popular in the mid-90's and communities are now having to replace or rebuild them as their useful lifespan is topping out at around 15 years.

Steps taken included months-long community discussions regarding a location for the new playground. While Herfurth Park emerged early on as an option to enhance and build upon all of the

development coming to downtown, the City Council, Parks Advisory Board, City staff and the Rowlett citizens who offered their input ultimately agreed that Kids Kingdom should be rebuilt right back in its original location: nestled in the trees at Pecan Grove Park!



So who got to design this fabulous new playground? Why, our community's kids, of course! We went straight to the source when contemplating what to include. An extremely successful Design Day event was held in partnership with the schools in Rowlett, which allowed the children to submit their designs and let their voices be heard!

Design and Features

Over 400 children and their parents attended the unveiling of the Dream Design for rebuilding the Kids Kingdom Playground in Pecan Grove Park on January 16 at Rowlett High School. With the help of many eager and enthusiastic volunteers, park designers had interviewed and brainstormed all that day with children at the Rowlett elementary and middle schools, who submitted their vision of the perfect community playground. This is something that, in a city the size of Rowlett, has never been done before. Thousands of children came up with drawings and designs of amenities they wanted to see in their new Kids Kingdom. Ideas included jet packs, elevators, teleporters, rollercoasters, pools, donuts, dinosaurs, merry-go-rounds, giant robots, racing slides, tunnels, sharks, taco play houses and gymnastic bars, just to name a few.

Designers then took all of the ideas to the drawing board, condensing

the children's ideas into a one-of-a-kind, safe, over-the-top, all-abilities accessible playground that is all their own. There are many special features on the playground; a taco playhouse, giant robot, historic train, dinosaur sandbox, giant net trampoline and, of course, the magic of the former Kids Kingdom was honored with a castle entrance.

The new 20,000 square foot facility will be accessible to children of all abilities and will be constructed from modern materials. It will include shade structures as well as a poured-in-place rubber surface, which will aid the accessibility of not only children, but parents and grandparents who may have mobility challenges as well! PLUS this will save the approximately \$18,000 cost per year to maintain engineered wood fiber.



Poured-in-place rubber surface



Accessible pull-ramp



Kid's Kingdom Community Playground

Pecan Grove Park, Rowlett, TX

Play By Design, Ithaca, NY - March 2015

PBDesign.com



Cost and Funding

KIDS KINGDOM COST - \$750,000

\$100,000 committed to by the City Council and funded in the City's FY2015 Adopted Budget.

\$557,500 included in the successful 2015 Community Investment Program Bond Election Package. This will build the bulk of the playground, including the castle structure at its entrance and the little children's area.

\$92,000 community fundraising effort. Once the Playground Committee was formed, fundraising began in earnest. Corporate and private donors were given the opportunity to sponsor all or part of five special playground features, such as the dinosaur sandbox area or the zip line, which range in cost from \$10,500 to \$37,000.



Zip Line

Climbing Wall

Dino Sandbox

Corporate and Private Donors Have Funded Many Special Features of the New Kids Kingdom!



THANK YOU to our Community Donors!

\$20,000
Milestone Electric
Tri-Con Construction



\$10,000
Rowlett PARDners
The DeLatte Family
Sanford Realty Renovations



\$5,000
Atmos Energy



\$2,500
Denton Parks Foundation
Keep Rowlett Beautiful



\$1,500
Lions Club
Inwood Bank
Honoring Vernon & Lorene Schrade
Rental One

Wells Fargo
Spirit Outfitters
Chick-fil-A
Super 8 Garland



\$500
Bounce 'N More
Oncor
Capital One

Linebarger Sampson
Bahai Faith
BB&T



I would like to thank EVERYONE who donated. Whether you're a large corporate sponsor or a grandparent purchasing a fence picket to honor a grandchild, Kids Kingdom would not be a reality today without YOU!!

Let's **Build this Playground** for the kids of Rowlett!

Send donations to Kids Kingdom Fund - P.O. Box 99 - Rowlett, TX 75030

We Need YOU!

A Playground Built by Volunteers

BUILD WEEK IS DECEMBER 1-6

By now, all of you know how passionate about our community I am, and how blessed I feel that you allow me to serve as your Mayor. Although I believe we have the best City staff in the country, they cannot create and maintain this community alone. A community is created by its **PEOPLE**. Hint: that's **YOU!** One of the greatest assets Rowlett has is the sheer volume of individual citizens, organizations and businesses that volunteer to help their City, giving back more than \$1 million of their time every year! It never ceases to amaze me, the number of people who love this community and show it through their volunteerism on a daily basis.

But now I'm asking YOU to pitch in as well!

Many, many volunteers are needed to build this magical playground so please consider sharing your excitement, expertise and experience! The Parks and Recreation Department will be planning events throughout the spring and summer to recruit volunteers. You don't have to be handy with tools, there are SO many different ways you can help!



BONUS!! Volunteer your time and your child or grandchild will be among the first children to EVER play on the new Kids Kingdom! Anyone who serves a shift gets a "Golden Ticket" (one ticket per shift) to play at a special ribbon cutting party!



Even though the focus of this project is to build a playground for our children, this community build event offers adults the opportunity to reach out across the community to make new contacts, new friends and strengthen ties within neighborhoods. I encourage you and your family can become a part of Rowlett's history!

Volunteer needs include:

- **Skilled Construction Team Members** – those volunteers who are comfortable using professional grade power tools, ladder work and lifting.
- **Construction Team Members** – volunteers who can paint, carry and assist the skilled team members.
- **Childcare Members** – volunteers interested in assisting with childcare for the construction team members.
- **Food Service Members** – volunteers to support the construction teams by manning the food and beverage tents.
- **Check In and Runners** – volunteers to man the check-in/volunteer tent and perform miscellaneous tasks.

For more information or to sign up now, please visit www.rowlett.com/KidsKingdom

Send donations to Kids Kingdom Fund - P.O. Box 99 - Rowlett, TX 75030