

For Immediate Release

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Kids in Worthington to Benefit from All-Access Playground

Early Risers Kiwanis Club Wins \$25,000 from Landscape Structures, Kiwanis

Delano, Minn. (Oct. 8, 2020) — Children of all abilities in Worthington, Minn., will soon have an all-inclusive playground at a local park — the only playground of its kind in the community of 13,000.

The playground project is the winner of the seventh annual Legacy of Play contest, sponsored by Kiwanis International and Landscape Structures Inc. For submitting the winning contest entry, the Early Risers Kiwanis Club of Worthington will receive US\$25,000 in playground equipment.

“Really? You’re kidding!” exclaimed Loreena Luetgers, member of the Early Risers Kiwanis Club of Worthington, after learning her club had won. She clapped her hands and pumped both fists in the air. “Thank you! I’m about to cry.”

The club garnered community support for the project, including financial help from a local man who had polio as a child and remembered feeling left out while watching other children play. The club’s contest application noted the resident offered to transport the playground equipment at no cost to the club, using his personal trucking company equipment.

A local family whose son has Joubert Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, also supported the playground project. In a letter that accompanied the club’s contest entry, the family wrote, “Since three months old, Blaine has been in physical, occupational and speech therapy and has made some great strides in his coordination and strength. Play and peer relationships are also such important parts of development. What an all-inclusive playground will mean for us is that Blaine will be able to explore and wander the playground independently, he will have more opportunities to be engaged with other children and hopefully make a new friend.”

The family noted their child would be able to use the playground equipment independently and play with his siblings and others. “When we talk about the park with Blaine and show him pictures of what is coming, he gets excited and will give a shrieking shout of “Yay!” and then tap his chest and say, “Me too, I can do it, I can play.”

Additional support will be provided by the City of Worthington Park Department, the city council, Chamber of Commerce and Prairie Rehab. Plans call for the playground to be installed on Kiwanis One Day on October 24, 2021. The club plans to begin construction on April 1 of next year, in tandem with the city’s construction of a new handicap accessible restroom facility.

Andrew Sloan, whose club in Barron, Wisc., won last year’s Legacy of Play contest, served as a judge this year. “This club had the clearest vision of all the entries,” he said of the plans from the Worthington club.

The playground equipment will be provided by Landscape Structures Inc., a partner of Kiwanis International. The two organizations have sponsored the Legacy of Play contest for seven years, annually awarding playground equipment to a Kiwanis club that shows the most need while presenting a fully developed plan for fundraising, construction and maintenance.

“On behalf of Landscape Structures, I would like to congratulate the Early Risers Kiwanis of Worthington on winning the Legacy of Play contest,” said Pat Faust, president of Landscape Structures. Landscape Structures is a leading manufacturer of playground equipment and works with communities of all sizes to develop play spaces for adults and children of all abilities. “We are thankful for the club’s commitment to their community, inclusion and play equipment. We look forward to working together with Kiwanis members and the community of Worthington to bring life to this inclusive playground.”

The Legacy of Play contest began in 2013 to encourage Kiwanis clubs to bring play and playgrounds to their communities, providing a legacy of play for future generations. Kiwanis International, headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., is a global organization of members of all ages, dedicated to serving the children of the world.

“Kiwanis International is delighted to award the Worthington Early Risers Kiwanis Club US\$25,000 in playground equipment to help build a new inclusive playground,” said 2020-21 Kiwanis International President Art Riley. “Kids need Kiwanis, and this playground will give kids of all abilities the opportunity to play together, and it will become a welcome destination point for families and children.”

Pam Norman, Chief Philanthropy Officer of the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, was encouraged to see 48 entries for this year’s contest. “We had better participation than ever,” she said, “and it shows that clubs are eager to get back to doing something joyful.”

To find a Kiwanis club near you, go to kiwanis.org/findaclub.

About Landscape Structures Inc.

Since 1971, Landscape Structures Inc. has been the leading manufacturer of commercial playground equipment in the world. Our employee-owned company designs community and school playgrounds that encourage kids of all ages and abilities to learn persistence, leadership, competition, bravery, support and empathy through play. We push the limits—of design, inclusion, play—to help kids realize there is no limit to what they can do today and in the future. For a better tomorrow, we play today. To bring a Landscape Structures playground to your community, visit playlsi.com.

About Kiwanis International

Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for high school students, Builders Club for middle school students, Kiwanis Kids for elementary school students and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, annually dedicate more than 18 million hours and raise more than \$100 million to strengthen communities and serve children. Nearly 552,000 adult and youth members in more than 80 nations and geographic areas

comprise the Kiwanis International family. For more information about Kiwanis International, visit www.kiwanis.org.

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