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McKenna's Place playground opens in Exeter

Eileen Cipriani Dispatch Correspondent - Article and pictures courtesy of Times Leader

When 5-year-old Mckenna Granahan arrived at the grand opening of the Mckenna's Place playground in Exeter, her eyes lit up and she signed to her mother "play".



Mckenna Granahan gave the seal of approval to the Exeter playground named in her honor.



Above, a crowd gathers for opening of Mckenna's Place playground, including State Rep. Phyllis Mundy, third from right, and Exeter Mayor Cassandra Coleman, second from right.

The ADA compliant playground was finally a place where Mckenna could safely play with her 8-year-old sister Emma, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Wyoming Area Kiwanis Club.

Each year the Kiwanis Club holds a Bed Race fundraiser to help a family of a child in need. Kiwanis member Megan Kuffta spoke to Chris and Ken Granahan of Exeter and suggested that the family be the beneficiaries of the annual fundraiser, but Chris Granahan had a better idea. Chris suggested that the funds be used to upgrade a local park and make it handicapped accessible so all children can play side by side.

Chris and Ken had wanted a place where both of their children, one typically abled, one exceptional (special needs), could play together.

Their daughter Mckenna suffers from Pallister-Killian Mosaic Syndrome, which is a rare chromosomal disorder that affects the everyday life of her and her family.

Although the Bed Race was extremely successful, it did not come close to the \$100,000-plus needed to upgrade the park. Not dissuaded the Kiwanis club approached Exeter Borough Council and received a pledge of equipment and personnel for the project. State Representative Phyllis Mundy secured a \$25,000 grant and Pride Mobility Products donated \$15,000.

“Our corporate focus is helping people with needs live active lives,” said Scott Meuser, chairman of Pride Mobility Products, at the playground grand opening.

In addition, the Exeter Lions Club donated \$1000 and most recently, Keystone Automotive donated \$15,000.

The project was truly a community effort and the Kiwanis also received hundreds of individual donations.

So what is next for the park? The Kiwanis members are working to raise funds to add an accessible three bay swing set with therapeutic safety seats.

The Kiwanis Club plans to continue to pursue funding in order to grow the main play structure with additional accessible elements.

To contribute to Mckenna's Place send contributions to Wyoming Area Kiwanis Club, PO Box 4052, Wyoming, PA 18644.