



Fall Family Festival a Huge Success!

OVER 400 PEOPLE ENJOYED THE AFTERNOON

The afternoon of Sunday, October 1, was sunny with mild temperatures—perfect weather for the second Fall Family Festival at the Playscape at Ripley. Over 400 people attended the afternoon which celebrated the opening of two accessible play elements on the Playscape – the Carousel and the Community Swing. The Festival was jointly hosted by the **Friends of the Playscape at Ripley** (FOTPAR) and the **Concord Integrated Preschool** (CIPS) Parent Group and sponsored by local real estate firm **Suzanne & Company**.

“It was so great to see the Playscape packed full of families getting out into nature and having fun,” remarked FOTPAR chair Edi Hetling.

“The CIPS Parent Group was thrilled to be a part of this amazing event with FOTPAR,” said Parent Group member Casey Atkins. “The Playscape at Ripley was an incredible inspiration in planning the new CIPS playground.” The new playground, which is right next door to the Playscape, opened this fall.

“Concord is a great family community ... families kept funneling in [to the Festival], but hardly anyone left until the very end.”

In addition to seeing the new CIPS playground, young Festival visitors got to grab a sponge, wash a Concord fire truck, and meet a member of the Concord Fire Department at the **Concord Family Network** (CFN) annual Fire Truck Wash. Visitors also met animals from **Drumlin Farm**, created autumn banners with **Musketaquid Arts & Environment**, played pumpkin games with FOTPAR, enjoyed a musical performance from **Hugh Hanley**, had their faces

(cont. on back)

Photos, top to bottom: the new accessible Carousel (top) and Community Swing (second from top) were in constant use during the afternoon; washing a Concord fire truck; having fun on the pumpkin obstacle course; a Festival visitor getting his face painted at the CIPS table; musician Hugh Hanley entertained the crowd with his children's songs.



New Elements at the Playscape



Several new elements that greatly expand the Playscape's accessibility have been installed over the past year:

- Last winter saw the installation of the **Goric Carousel** and **Community Swing**. The Carousel allows a child to roll onto the structure in their wheelchair and play side by side with other children without needing to transfer. Similarly, the Community Swing allows a child with physical handicaps to swing with a group of children rather than be strapped in an individual chair-style swing, allowing for a high level of inclusive play. "These new elements are exciting because they address inclusivity at a physical and a social level," noted Playscape architect Jennifer Brooke. "Visitors of all abilities will have access to the sensory and gross motor benefits of outdoor play as well as the activities of negotiation, sharing, teamwork, and communication. These are just some of the things that make play so valuable, and these additions to the Playscape make these experiences available to everyone, no exceptions."
- **Rubber safety surfacing** under these two elements was installed this past August. This surface allows visitors using mobility devices to easily access the Carousel and Community Swing and also provides a safe ground covering for all visitors.
- In September, the **guide rope** along the Playscape's accessible pathway was installed. This guide rope can be used by visitors with limited mobility and sight as well as by seniors for wayfinding.
- In October, **three new trees**—two Quaking Aspens and an American Hophornbeam—were installed at the Playscape to replace some of the trees lost in the August 2016 tornado. Funding for these trees was provided in part by the Town of Concord Community Preservation Committee and the Concord Garden Club. ■



Clockwise from top left: the Community Swing; the Goric Carousel; the rubber surfacing; the new guide rope; the two new Quaking Aspens; the new Hophornbeam.

Funding Update

To date, the Playscape has received over \$330,000 in donations from individual, foundation, corporate and municipal donors. This amount includes over \$205,000 in Community Preservation Act Funding from the Town of Concord. Thank you to everyone for your support!

FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL, *cont. from front*

painted by CIPS, made paper bag puppets with self advocates from **Minute Man Arc**, tried karate with the **Elite Freestyle Karate Studio**, and did a StoryWalk® from **First Connections**. Ice cream from West Concord's **Reasons to Be Cheerful** was also a Festival favorite.

"Concord is a great family community, evidenced by all the child-focused organizations represented today," observed Lauren Gavin Kopcsó, CFN member and organizer of the Fire Truck Wash. "The children had such a wonderful time at the Festival, running from station to station. Families kept funneling in, but hardly anyone left until the very end. It was so nice to be a part of this fantastic event! "

"We really enjoyed seeing so many families and having fun at the amazing Playscape," said Concord resident Tara Martin, who visited the Festival with her three children. "My kids loved the face painting, the fire truck, and the games."

The first Fall Family Festival took place in October 2016. The Friends of the Playscape at Ripley hope to make this an annual event for the families of Concord and the surrounding towns. ■