

The Dream Continues!

In 2002, Kiwanian Darrell Rice had a big dream. As President of the Friends of Warriors Path State Park, he and other members of the Friends organization developed an idea for a playground at Warriors Path State Park in Kingsport, TN. Research into other playground concepts and input from area children led the group to decide to build a Boundless Playground, one that is accessible to children of all abilities. What began as a simple playground costing a few hundred thousand dollars grew to a huge playground costing over \$4 million. Talk about a dream!

As the work on the playground advanced into the construction stage, it became clear that Kiwanian Darrell Rice would not be present to see its completion. Diagnosed with cancer, Darrell continued to serve his club and community as long as he had the strength. As Darrell approached the end of his time on earth, the playground team asked him if they could name the playground, "Darrell's Dream". He agreed.

In honor of Darrell, our club donated \$10,000 toward the construction of the Crossroads structure in the center of the playground. General Shale Corporation, a local brick company, donated the special brick needed to construct the Crossroads structure. In addition to our donation, club members also turned out when the call came for volunteers to spread rubber mulch under the play equipment, to landscape areas around the playground and to assemble picnic tables. Over 100 man hours were spent spreading 30 tons of rubber mulch and many, many tons of dirt and gravel.

On Monday, April 23, 2007, Darrell's Dream came true! The Boundless Playground opened for all the children of the Tri-Cities. At the opening ceremony, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Commissioner Jim Fyke said, "We are extremely proud to have this extraordinary playground that makes universally accessible play available to children of all ages at Warrior's Path State Park. I think the public-private partnership that made this project possible, as well as the playground itself, are models that will gain regional if not national attention that will be well deserved. More importantly, no child will have to leave behind support equipment or be otherwise limited in their ability to enjoy this remarkable facility."

Fast forward to April 20, 2013, six years later. Darrell's club continued to honor Darrell's memory and serve young children in our community. Along with over 100 community volunteers, club members came out early on Saturday morning to give the Playground its annual spring cleaning. This year, our club selected the spring playground cleaning as our Kiwanis "One Day" project. Special Projects Committee Chair, Russ Jackson, worked with the Friends of Warriors Path Park to prepare for the day. Members of our club served as Team Captains for groups of volunteers that washed all of the Playground equipment, pressure washed the picnic and entry pavilions, washed the bathrooms, cleaned the park benches and trash cans and cleared winter trash from the play areas. Club members were ably assisted by members of the Key Clubs at Dobyns Bennett and Sullivan South High Schools.

In summer, Darrell's Dream serves as many as 500 children a day, with many school groups arriving by bus for nature programs and exercise. In 2012, 171,000 people visited the Boundless Playground. Handicapped children are able to fully participate due to the accessible design of the Playground.

Among the many volunteers helping prepare the playground for another busy year were the Lions Club, Master Gardeners, American Eagle clothing store, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Food and drink were provided by Food City, McDonalds, Arby's and Wal-Mart. The Kingsport Kiwanis Club, along with other local volunteer organizations, intends to see that the Boundless Playground continues to serve all young children by participating in spring and fall clean up. Darrell's Dream continues!