

City of Poulsbo

Parks & Recreation Department



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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www.cityofpoulsbo.com

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Play for All Groundbreaking

Poulsbo, WA – The City of Poulsbo broke ground on the long-anticipated Play for All project at Raab Park last week. Play for All, an inclusive and accessible playground for all ages and abilities, has been in development for over six years having overcome multiple hurdles due to the pandemic.

Mayor Becky Erickson stated, "This playground is so very important to our community, especially our most vulnerable population. We're breaking ground now because of a devoted and passionate group of citizens had a vision, built a coalition of support, and approached the City as a partner to help make it happen. We are so thankful for their efforts and are looking forward to Play for All opening for all community members to enjoy."

Back in 2018, a citizen group forged early partnerships with the City of Poulsbo Parks & Recreation and the Poulsbo Rotary Club, who took it on as a club project, to build a fully inclusive and ADA-compliant playground in North Kitsap. It will be one of the first of its kind in North Kitsap.

Aaron Murphy, a Poulsbo Club Rotarian and Play for All steering committee member said, "I am so appreciative of the teamwork and the tenacity of the City and all the players



From left to right: Jones Ranes, Councilmember Ed Stern, John Ackenhusen, Steve Calhoun, Poulsbo Rotary Club President Chad Solvie, Rachel Cornette, Mary McCluskey, Mayor Becky Erickson, KJ Lange, Jeff Ozimek, Ben Vestman, Denise Vestman, Aaron Murphy, Mike Heacock, Beau Todd, Rob Knutson

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that made this come together. I personally spent years working with my autistic son going to therapy with swings and specialty equipment, including sensory integration devices. He is now a thriving and successful young man who graduated high school and is heading to Peninsula college to get his welding certificate.”

The importance of inclusive playgrounds isn’t limited to children. Young people and adults with disabilities receive the same benefits of sensory input, physical play, engagement, and community and relationship building. Inclusive playgrounds create a space where people of all ages can meet and engage with their friends regardless of their abilities.

“It’s inspiring to hear from families about how much our community needs Play for All,” stated Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Ozimek. “Playgrounds are social hubs for people of all ages and abilities. They are also particularly important meeting places for families with disabilities who may struggle to find a space where they can be part of the community.”



After the playground is completed, it is expected that a future community ribbon cutting will be planned to celebrate the grand opening. While a date has not been set, it may occur in spring once all the flowers and plantings start to bloom.

“Parks and Recreation, and the entire design team and steering committee kept this alive all the way through Covid,” Murphy said. “This community deserves and looks forward to seeing this inclusive, accessible, and equitable park in our community, where all children (and all adults) have the freedom and the right to play!”