

A playground for everyone: All-inclusive play area opens in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
September 25 2017 11:06 AM





ALTON - Dozens of community members gathered at Gordon Moore Park Monday morning to view the grand opening of the new all-inclusive play area.

The play area, which utilizes soft surfaces and specially-designed equipment, is designed for usage by anyone. This includes the more than 10 percent of Riverbend residents who have some sort of disability - be it physical, mental or social. The park was built using donations from the community, especially a \$125,000 grant from Phillips 66 and a matching grant from both the Illinois Park and Recreation Association and Cunningham Recreation Game Time and Play Corps, which provided the equipment.

During the grand opening, Alton Parks and Recreation Director Michael Haynes introduced several people involved in the creation of the all-inclusive park. He showcased how the park could be built without utilizing any tax dollars from the city. With grants coupled with donations from the community and volunteer labor, Haynes said the community was able to provide a playground in which no one would feel as if they were left out of the fun.

"No one wants to feel left out," Haynes said. "People often don't remember times someone may have been left out of their fun, but people who are left out will remember."



Phillips 66 Community Relations Executive Melissa Erker spoke at the opening as well. She said her company's motto of "providing energy and improving lives" guided them to selecting this project in particular for the grant.

"It's great to help truly improve the lives of everyone here," she said. "This is an example of great partnership and vision."

Renee Beard of Cunningham Recreation Game Time and Play Corps spoke during the ribbon cutting ceremony as well. Beard said the all-inclusive play area will serve as a model for future projects across the nation. She thanked the community participation of Alton as well as its "visionary leadership."

A prime example of that leadership, Alton Mayor Brant Walker, said the credit for the project should go to Haynes, who spearheaded the entire endeavor. Walker said, as a former coach for the Special Olympics, this park was a "no-brainer," once Haynes delivered it to his desk.

Walker also said the all-inclusive park was a large portion, but still only a portion, of the coming improvements to the park. He said the future of Gordon Moore Park will continuously become brighter through community interaction as well as continuing private-public partnerships.

