

Lifelong Edwardsville residents pledge \$50,000 donation to 'A Better Place to Play Campaign'

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Lifelong Edwardsville residents, Mark and Sally Speciale, have pledged a donation of \$50,000 to help fund the construction of the new family pavilion at Leon Corlew Park as part of the "A Better Place to Play" campaign.

The City of Edwardsville announced the park has officially closed for the season on Sept. 26, 2017. The city said thousands visited the splash pad this season in another outstanding year.

The “A Better Place to Play” campaign was launched to raise funds to develop three new parks in Edwardsville, including Leon Corlew Park.

City officials said the Speciale’s have been long-time supporters of various local organizations that have worked to make the Edwardsville community what it is today, including the Edwardsville Community Foundation. The pledge of \$50,000 was made by the Speciale’s in honor of their grandson Nick Ursch.

"The Speciale’s donation will provide families enjoying the splash pad, playground and walking trail another shade shelter they can flock to as a relief from the sun’s rays when the park opens back up next Memorial Day," Bob Pfeiffer, director of Edwardsville Parks and Recreation, said in a statement.

“We are so grateful to the Speciale’s for their contribution to Leon Corlew Park. The park has been overwhelmingly successful since opening in 2016 and we have seen countless numbers of happy faces on youngsters and parents alike. “It’s been really wonderful to see this project take shape and add to the summer fun of so many families. We look forward to opening the park again in 2018 with a brand new pavilion for all to share.”

In making the donation, Mark Speciale said, “It is good to know that the Leon Corlew Splash Park will soon have an additional pavilion for all citizens to use and enjoy. Sally and I have lived in the Edwardsville area all our lives. It is a great community because of its citizens, organizations and leaders.

"People in this community are willing to give their time, talents and dollars to make it even better. Our entire family is proud to be able to do our part."

Leon Corlew Park offers visitors a splash pad and playground at the intersection of South Main and Schwarz Street. It also includes a walking/fitness track, shade structures, pavilions, seasonal concession stand and restrooms/changing rooms

Leon Corlew Park is one of the three parks included in the City of Edwardsville’s fundraising effort – A Better Place to Play. The campaign is aimed at raising funds for three new parks in Edwardsville. The other two parks in development include Plummer Family Park, a Sports Park for baseball, softball, soccer, pickleball and more near the I-55 corridor and an Ice Rink & Teen Center to be located on District #7 grounds off of

Governor's Parkway. Sponsorship and donations are also needed to help fund these parks so construction can begin.

Several grants were awarded for the construction of Leon Corlew Park including a \$300,000 grant from Metro East Parks and Recreation District, a \$400,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) and two additional Madison County Park Enhancement Program (PEP) grants totaling \$266,310 were also awarded.

Other sponsors of the Leon Corlew Park, include: Gordon and Holly Broom (\$50,000); Junior Service Club of Edwardsville/Glen Carbon (\$40,000); Edwardsville Rotary Club (\$30,000); First Clover Leaf Bank (\$10,000) and Global Brew Tap House (\$8,000).

For more information about sponsorship opportunities for Leon Corlew Park visit <http://www.betterplacetoplay.com> or call Katie Grable at (618) 692-7538.

To make a donation to the A Better Place to Play Campaign, area residents and potential sponsors are encouraged to donate online at <http://www.betterplacetoplay.com> or by contacting Edwardsville Community Foundation at <http://www.edwardsvillecommunityfoundation.org/>. All donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law through the foundation.

For more information on major gifts, please contact Edwardsville Community Foundation at (855) 464-3223. Donations may be mailed to Edwardsville Community Foundation to P.O. Box 102, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please make a notation on your check that the funds are to be applied to the "A Better Place to Play" campaign. If you wish to support a specific parks project, please also notate the designated park with your donation.

Those interested in learning more about the "A Better Place to Play" campaign can find information online at www.betterplacetoplay.com or call (618) 692-7538. "A Better Place to Play" can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/abetterplacetoplay and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/BP2Play.