

Edwardsville Township honored today with Governor's Hometown Award for Kelan's Wheelchair project

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville Township is honored to be selected as a 2018 Governor's Hometown Award recipient in the Healthy Futures Category for the Kelan's Wheelchair Accessible Swing project.

Some children wish for a trip to Disney Land or a new iPhone. Then there are boys like Kelan Masinelli. In April of 2018, this young boy's tender wish came true. Kelan's

Wheelchair Accessible Swing made it possible for children with disabilities to play in the park. Instead of sitting on the sidelines, children of all abilities are now able to swing with their peers. Kelan's Swing, located at the Junior Service Boundless Playground in Edwardsville Township Community Park (the Airplane Park) was a labor of love for the community.

On Tuesday, Nov. 20, Kelan's Wheelchair Swing will formally be recognized as a 2018 Governor's Hometown Award recipient in the Healthy Futures Category. The awards ceremony will acknowledge 23 projects across the state that served to enhance the lives of those living within Illinois communities.

"We are honored that Kelan's swing was chosen among the worthy contenders for this year's award, but most of all, we're honored that Kelan and his family chose Edwardsville Township Community Park for this project" said Edwardsville Township Supervisor Fred Schulte. "The countless hours that community, organization and township volunteers gave freely to ensure Kelan's dream became a reality speaks to the strength of character of those in our community. Edwardsville Township will continue to ensure that Kelan's swing makes the Park a fun and welcoming place for all children of all abilities."

Kelan health has kept him from being able to take part in most childhood activities and play with friends since his birth. The young man, who is now 11 years old, was granted his request for an inclusive swing in the Park for children with disabilities through the Make-A-Wish Foundation. This effort was supported by Kelan's family, the Edwardsville Community Foundation, the Junior Service Club, Restore Decor, The Tiger Den, Edwardsville Township and numerous community volunteers. The swing has made it possible for Kelan to play in the park with his sister and other area children.

The goal for Kelan and his family was to introduce a safe, accessible swing in the Park to make the Boundless Playground truly without bounds. The all-inclusive playground has become a destination for children from several hours away.

In July of 2017, at Kelan's 10th birthday party at the Wildey Theatre in Edwardsville, the community helped raise \$13,000 for his wish. The result of granting Kelan's wish will provide joy to children with similar disabilities as him for many years to come. Taking a trip to the Park now fills the Masinelli family of Edwardsville with a deep sense of pride, and seeing other children use the swing inspires them, serving as a testament to a bright and inclusive future.

"We get so much joy from watching kids in and around our community enjoy the swing," said Tim Masinelli, Kelan's father. "We understand how much it means to them and their families. The only thing worse than not knowing where you belong is knowing

where you don't. This is exactly what Kelan wanted to accomplish. We want to thank Edwardsville Township, the Edwardsville Community Foundation, and every single person that donated their time and resources to make this happen.

It is this inclusive environment that is being celebrated by the state through the designation of the award.

Representatives from all projects being honored in the 2018 round of awards will attend Tuesday's ceremony at the Illinois Governor's Mansion in Springfield.

For more information, please contact Beth Behrhorst at the Edwardsville Township office at (618) 656-0292.

Edwardsville Township is comprised of the City of Edwardsville, Village of Glen Carbon and unincorporated areas just outside of these two municipalities. The Township Supervisor's office is located at 300 West Park in Edwardsville and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Learn more about Edwardsville Township online at www.edwardsvilletownship.com or contact the Township Offices by phone at 618-656-0292.