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Darrell's Dream Boundless™ Playground Opens at Warrior's Path State Park During National Week of the Young Child

Kingsport, TN, April 23, 2007—With today's grand opening of Darrell's Dream Boundless™ Playground, the Tri-Cities area is now home to a unique play area that provides fun and learning opportunities for children of all abilities.

The playground was officially opened today at Warrior's Path State Park, the first state park in the country to house such a Boundless playground. The new play area is associated with the National Center for Boundless Playgrounds, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities create extraordinary playgrounds for children with and without disabilities.

At today's 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."

Betty DeVinney, project co-chair for Darrell's Dream, said it's very appropriate that the grand opening coincides with the National Week of the Young Child. "The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs."

DeVinney said support for this playground has come from a broad group of corporate and individual sponsors. "I've been involved with many community projects, but this particular effort may have the support of more people than anything else I've seen. I think that's because it answers such a need in our community. I can't say enough about how great the people are in our area, and especially our corporate sponsors. It's because of them that Darrell's Dream is now a reality."

Darrell's Dream has many special features, including universally accessible playground equipment and surfaces, a walking trail accessible by the blind, sand island, environmental maze with interactive play stations, a picnic pavilion, specially designed restroom facilities, pedestrian bridge and increased parking. There is no admission charge for the playground.

Darrell's Dream is the 108th project affiliated with the national Boundless Playground association. "All of us at Boundless Playgrounds are so excited about the opening of Darrell's Dream – the first Boundless™ playground in the country at a state park," said Lisa Bigman, Boundless Playgrounds Senior Director of Strategic Alliances. "We hope other states will follow Tennessee's lead and that this will be the first of many state parks where children with and without disabilities can play together, side by side. This project was an amazing collaborative effort – the epitome of how public-private partnerships can make all the difference – and we are extremely proud to have been involved."

According to DeVinney, it's not too late for interested people to be part of this project's success. "We have plans for a universally accessible tree house and a Narnia themed Braille trail." Donations to help make these features come to life may be sent to Darrell's Dream, 477 Steadman Road, Blountville, TN 37617.

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Highlights of Darrell's Dream Boundless™ Playground Warriors' Path State Park, Kingsport, Tn.

On a Boundless™ playground you'll find:

- every child can reach the highest play deck
- play structures configured to support children's development
- universally accessible pathways and surfacing
- cozy spots where everyone can gather
- equipment like swings and bouncers with back support
- elevated sand tables and activity panels where children of all abilities can play together
- sensory-rich activities that let the imagination soar
- **everyone can be in the middle of the fun!**

Specific to Darrell's Dream™, you'll find:

Charter Communications Pavilion

A perfect gathering place for children and families to have a snack, sit and chat or just get into the shade for a while. The pavilion is a beautiful area, centrally located on the playground and, like the rest of the park, accessible to all.

Eastman A-MAZE-ing Play Area

This area is filled with many unique play opportunities that range from individual manipulative spaces to spaces where several children can engage in cooperative play using their imaginations. The area includes pathways with many intersections, child-size spaces and is designed to allow children to use both natural and manmade elements.

Food City Ed and Eva Moore Tots Play Area

This area is especially designed by Boundless for children ages 2-5. Most often children will be seen playing individually or next to one another without much interaction. The environment supports two behaviors: repetitive (looping) activity for the development of physical skills; and gathering (branching out) practices for developing intellectual concepts by collecting, comparing, sorting and testing.

Mountain States Health Alliance Adventure Island

Children ages 5-12 might find this play area more interesting. In this area, children may be seen playing next to one another without much interaction or playing in small groups. The environment supports learning behaviors such as: gathering (branching out) practices for developing intellectual concepts by collecting, comparing, sorting and testing; planning activity for the development of games, rules and decision-making; and gathering together to allow for social interaction.

Speedway Children's Charities Sand Play Area

You don't have to sit down to play in this sand box! It's designed so that wheelchairs can roll right up to a sandtable, making this experience all inclusive. Children use their imaginations to create their masterpieces for all to see.

Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground Named in Memory of Darrell Rice

Darrell Rice was president of the Friends of Warriors' Path State Park when the idea for a playground first surfaced. He embraced the idea, worked with others to develop a concept, and actively shared his passion to get others excited about the project.

Darrell served as co-vice chair of the Boundless Playground Committee until his death in January 2004. The committee carries on the work and is proud to name the playground in honor and memory of Darrell.

Around the playground, you'll see sketches of a "turtle on the fence post." That picture was on Darrell's business card. Darrell would say, "Whenever you see a turtle on a fence post, you know someone had to put him there, because the turtle couldn't get there on his own." That was how Darrell viewed life—nothing happens on its own and it takes people working passionately to make dreams come true. That was Darrell, and we miss him.

The playground was just one of Darrell's many projects. Here's a partial list of other volunteer work he led or inspired:

- 16-year volunteer and "chief elf" on Kingsport Chamber Santa Train
- Chair of Chamber Air Show
- Started the Kingsport Convention and Visitors Bureau Ambassador Program
- Helped create Friends of Warriors' Path State Park; he also helped get soccer fields, mountain bike trails and Frisbee golf to the park
- Clean Kingsport Chair
- Organizer of Fun Fest Prayer breakfast
- Optimist Fishing Derby
- Kingsport Christmas Parade Grand Marshal
- Kiwanis Club Golf Scramble Chair
- Kiwanis Coats and Shoes Project
- Helped form Kingsport YMCA
- President, American Heart Association



National Center for Boundless Playgrounds®



The National Center for Boundless Playgrounds® is the first national nonprofit dedicated to helping communities create extraordinary playgrounds where all children, with and without disabilities, can develop essential skills for life as they learn together through play. We provide leadership, training, and technical and support services to promote play environments that are barrier-free and provide all children with developmental advantages.



- ☆ **Playing matters:** At the heart of Boundless Playgrounds' mission is the belief that playing matters for children of all abilities. Experts in pediatrics and early childhood education agree that through play, children develop their language skills, decision-making abilities, social interaction strategies, and physical, sensory and cognitive strengths.



- ☆ **Barrier-free play matters:** More than six million children in the United States have some type of disability that makes it hard or impossible for them to play on traditional playgrounds, according to U.S. Health and Human Services data. Boundless Playgrounds' philosophy builds on the far-reaching vision of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), going even further to address the needs of those with physical, developmental, cognitive and sensory disabilities.



- ☆ **Providing developmental advantage matters:** Boundless Playgrounds play environments are uniquely configured to support children's predictable play behaviors. They feature a variety of stimulating, sensory-rich activities, with rigor and challenge for every child, enabling each to play at his or her highest level of ability.



We partner with local and state governments, park departments, school systems, hospitals, businesses, individuals, children and families, civic organizations, foundations and other nonprofits. As an unbiased, "knowledgeable but neutral" nonprofit organization, Boundless Playgrounds works collaboratively with playground equipment producers, vendors and design professionals. We do not manufacture or sell playground equipment.

Founded in 1997 and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1998, our organization has helped over 70 communities establish Boundless Playgrounds in 20 states and Canada. Dozens more are currently in development. Each month we receive as many as 200 inquiries from across the U.S. and beyond.

We believe at least one playground in each community or regional area should be a barrier-free Boundless Playground, where children of all abilities gain developmental advantages. There is a compelling, unfilled need for these magical play places. With your support, the potential to change lives and enrich communities is truly *boundless*.

For every child, a place to play:
Every child! Every ability! Everywhere!

45 Wintonbury Avenue ☆ Bloomfield, CT 06002
860-243-8315 ☆ fax: 860-243-5854 ☆ website: www.boundlessplaygrounds.org



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Play is Vital for the Healthy Development of Children

Children, regardless of ability or disability, navigate their world through play. According to “Play is Essential for Brain Development” published by the Children’s Institute for Learning and Development (CHILD), “evidence from research into brain development shows that challenging environments like well-designed playgrounds will encourage social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth for children.”

The playground, often thought of as a place where children can “run off excess energy,” is actually more of a learning lab, according to Jean Schappet, co-founder and creative director of the National Center for Boundless Playgrounds. Schappet is an expert in helping people develop playgrounds that both address the developmental needs of children and celebrate the principles of universally accessible design. She recently co-authored *High Expectations: Playgrounds for Children of All Abilities*, which focuses on play environments for preschoolers. It is the first in a series of three books being published



by Boundless Playgrounds about barrier-free play environments for children of all abilities across all stages of their development.



At a Boundless Playground, Schappet explains, all children are able to achieve what’s known as “engaged play,” where they move from being in the reality of “now” to places where their imagination has taken them. For example, the high spot of a playground, guided by a child’s imagination, can become a ship’s mast for a captain, a castle turret for a princess or a fort tower for a soldier.

“All children who are capable of independent play want three things in a playground: They want to do fun things, they want to be in interesting places and everybody wants to be in the middle of play. This is the essence of play,” says Schappet. “It is what makes play compelling for children and why they are excited about doing it.”

How Do Boundless Playgrounds Standards Relate to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?



Building on the far-reaching vision of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Boundless Playgrounds play environments reach even higher to ensure that children and adults with and without disabilities can experience all the excitement and learning of the playground together. Whereas the primary focus of the ADA’s accessibility guidelines for playgrounds is on wheelchair accessibility, Boundless Playgrounds’ performance criteria address a wide range of barriers that limit the use of a play environment for people with disabilities. Our playgrounds enable all children —

including those with physical, developmental, cognitive and sensory disabilities — to experience independent, self-directed play, each at his or her own highest level of ability. A further advantage is that our playgrounds make it possible for everyone to be in the middle of play, together.

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time.

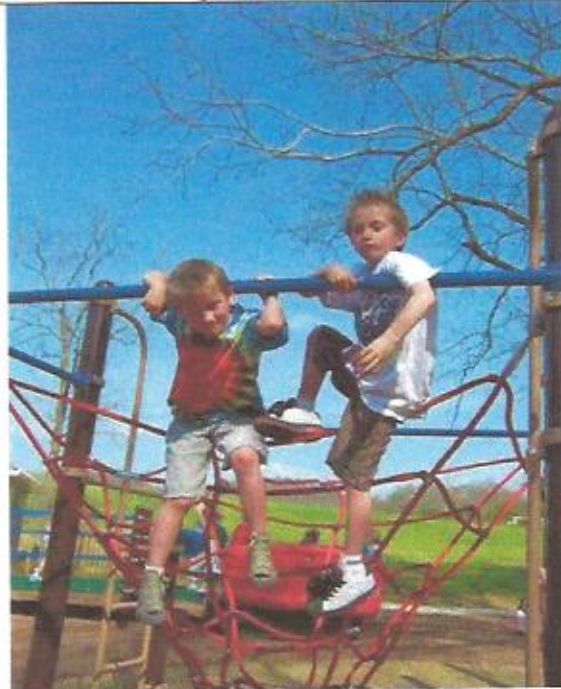
May 11, 2007

Special Edition Honoring Darrell Rice

Darrell's Dream Becomes a Reality!



Darrell Rice, memorialized in brick, leaves a lasting legacy to all the children in the greater Kingsport community.



Sons of past Kiwanis President Dan Coughlin have a good time climbing the ropes.



Children confined to a wheel chair such as the young girl above can participate on the sway swing.



Kiwanis members in front of Crossroads structure, a memorial to Darrell Rice. The club donated \$10,000 to its construction.

Darrell's Dream Comes True!

By Jim Cornell

In 2002, Kiwanian Darrell Rice had a big dream. As President of the Friends of Warrior's Path State Park, he and other members of the organization developed an idea for a playground at Warrior's Path State Park in Kingsport, Tennessee. 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 about \$3 million. Talk about a dream!

As the work on the playground advanced into the construction stage, it became clear that Darrell would not be present to see its completion. Diagnosed with cancer, Darrell continued to serve the Kiwanis Club and the 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, the Kingsport Kiwanis 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 memorial. One of the key features of the structure is a turtle at the top of each fence post. Darrell always carried a business card that showed a turtle on top of a fence post. He was quick to point out that the turtle did not get there by himself. He had to have help. When Darrell chaired the club's sole fundraising project, the Golf Scramble, he was always able to get plenty of volunteers to help "put the turtle on the fence post".

In addition to the donation, club members also turned out when the call came for volunteers to spread rubber mulch under the play equipment, to landscape areas of the playground, and to assemble picnic tables. Over 100 hours were spent spreading 30 tons of rubber mulch and 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. In the opening ceremony, Co-Chair Betty DeVinney said, "One out of every nine children in the Tri-Cities has a disability, and most of them have spent years watching instead of participating on the playground. That wait stops today!" She added, "The playground could not have happened without a partnership between the state and private sectors." Many local businesses partnered with the Tennessee State Parks and the Friends of Warriors Path State Park to make Darrell's Dream a living reality, complete with turtles on top of the fence posts. Darrell is there, too, with his face reproduced in brick in the Crossroads structure, watching the children at play . . . All the children!



A four year old tries to line up the butterfly in one of the interpretive elements.



Two children race down the roller slide.





