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Brooklyn's Playground

'Design Day' highlights plan for all-access Pocatello site

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POCATELLO — Designing Brooklyn's Playground got under way on Thursday with an official "Design Day" full of activities at Wilcox Elementary School.

Dennis Wille, a designer with Leathers & Associates, was in the Gate City on Thursday, meeting with and interviewing children, hearing their ideas for an all-access playground planned for OK Ward Park in Pocatello.

The project is the brainchild of Jonny and Melissa Fisher, whose daughter, Brooklyn, was born with spina bifida. Their hope is to create a place not just for use by those with physical disabilities, but for use by all children regardless of ability.

A big part of that process is asking for input from some of the elementary aged kids in District 25. Part of that was through a drawing competition,



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Dennis Wille, a designer with Leathers & Associates, works on plans for Brooklyn's Playground on Thursday afternoon at Wilcox Elementary School in Pocatello. [For video from this story, go to idahostatejournal.com.](http://idahostatejournal.com)

for which the kids were asked to draw what they would most like to see in a playground.

Part of that was through conversations Wille had with students at Wilcox on Thursday,

listening to the dreams they have for that playground.

Later, in the evening, Wille talked about some of those ideas, but he spent far more time describing the process of

building the playground, currently planned for September, giving the more than 250 people in attendance a good idea of what to expect.

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“People from my office will come, probably on a Monday, and we will start building on Tuesday,” Wille said, telling them the project would be done in six days. “They way we do that, is we give out little instructions to many volunteers.”

He said a massive number of volunteers will ultimately be needed, including those who will do the actually building and a myriad of volunteers to support that process. Those include volunteers to check in the volunteers, to feed the volunteers, to bring water and other drinks to the volunteers working on the project.

Although the primary construction process will be complete by the end of that week, Wille said the playground won't quite be ready for playing on because the rubber surface will have to be professionally installed at a later time.

But once that's complete, the playground will open with an official ceremony.

“At that point, as your kids rush out to that playground, the adults realize that they have really done more than build a playground,” Wille said. “You realize that you have truly built the dreams of your

children. And you realize, as you look around and see all the adults gathered, that you've really built a stronger community through this process.”

While the process of building the playground can seem a rather large task, it's raising the funds for Brooklyn's Playground by this summer that could really be the tough part of the equation.

To date, about \$45,500 has been raised, roughly 11 percent of the \$400,000 needed to fund the project. Fundraising is ongoing. In fact, those who just want to donate outright can do so at the project's website, www.brooklynspayground.org.

The site also includes more information about the project, including the process to develop the playground and pictures of similar playgrounds from around the country.

Those who want to help but also want a little bang for their buck can get it later this month at Don Aslett's Museum of Clean, which is hosting Brooklyn's Winter Picnic for the Park on Feb. 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost for the event is \$5 per adult, \$2 per child, or \$15 for the family. The day will feature plenty of entertainment and activities along with several vendors selling food. For more information on the event can be found at the project's website.