

Can-Do PLAYGROUND

Where dreams are never disabled

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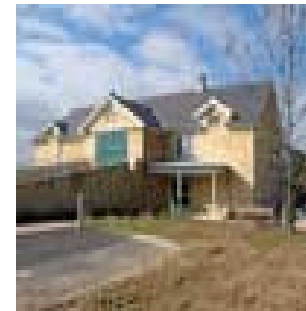
April 2007

Blue Ball Barn Opens

By Pete Booker ~ Wilmington

Calling it "a fine example of teamwork", Governor Ruth Ann Minner opened the Blue Ball Dairy Barn at the Alapocas Run Park on Thursday, March 1, 2007. Built in 1914, the newly renovated Blue Ball Barn will serve as a multi-purpose community space for meetings, educational programs, special events and private rentals with indoor and outdoor options. It also houses the Delaware Folk Art Collection, a vibrant cross section of the diversity of cultures found in the First State, and exhibits on dairy farming and the history of the barn and surrounding properties.

"This park will become the open space centerpiece of a thriving community that blends residential, commercial and industrial activities consistent with my Livable Delaware initiative," Gov. Minner said. Other state officials also praised the facility, part of the exciting Blue Ball Properties project that includes Alapocas Run State Park, the home of the Can-Do Playground, along with many transportation improvements. Department of Transportation Secretary Carolann Wicks credited DeIDOT's partnership with DNREC and other agencies for the building's rebirth. Added Delaware Economic Development Director Judy McKinney Cherry: "The opening of this restored building also marks an occasion for us to celebrate an extremely successful partnership between private industry, government and the community."



The Can-Do Playground, a project of six Wilmington, Delaware area Rotary clubs in partnership with DeIDOT and the State Division of Parks and Recreation and a major feature of the new park, will open in July, 2007. It is Delaware's first public playground at which children with sensory, developmental and/or physical disabilities will be able to play right alongside their fully able friends and family members. The Playground is going to one more outstanding feature of this exceptional public-private partnership.

Sculptural Entryway Will Wow Visitors

By Lise Monty ~ Wilmington

The unique and playful sculptural entryway that will great visitors to the Can-Do Playground will generate excitement while hinting at the fun-filled pleasures that lie ahead. Its impact will assure that before they get to actually spin or glide or play in a sandbox, visitors will know this is not a run-of-the-mill playground.

Sculptor Rick Rothrock, of Arden, had magic on his mind when he conceived the idea for the "dramatic entrance," and he thought big... Very big! Rothrock identified a 9.5-ton boulder of Brandywine granite as the perfect raw material, not only for its innate qualities but because it was unearthed from the same Alapocas Run State Park to which it will return after being transformed.



The stone is being split in half before Rothrock polishes the inner surfaces until they are smooth and dark, almost black, and the perfect surface for the Can-Do logo.

Rothrock's plans call for one half of the rock to be placed vertically, as if rising from the earth, and inscribed with the logo. The other half will lie beside it on the ground inscribed with a mirror image of the logo, "a playful and humorous "oD-naC," as Rothrock described it. For those who like fantasy, it will look as if a giant came along and split the large rock, leaving it as it fell. For Rothrock, "it is a statement that this gem of a playground is found within the park, like crystals within a geode."



This sculpture project is supported by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts.

Among Rothrock's other public artwork in Delaware are the recently completed "Rendezvous" in Freedom Square Plaza, between the state and city/county buildings in Wilmington; the "Quill and Cube" monument in Dover, commissioned by the Delaware Heritage Commission to commemorate Delaware's role in ratifying the Constitution; and "Three Mill Pylons" at Three Mill Corporate Center in Wilmington.

His international experiences and affiliation with Sister Cities of Wilmington, People to People, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts and the exhibiting group SYNE are an important source of inspiration and learning. Rick has exhibited in Europe, and he served as an arts ambassador to Xi'an, China. He has been active as an artist and arts advocate in the Wilmington arts community for 27 years, graduating from the University of Delaware with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1978. Rothrock's sculptures may be seen at the Blue Streak Gallery in Wilmington and the Raubacher Gallery in Dover.

Can-Do Fundraising Completed, Construction Set To Begin

By Hughlett Kirby ~ Wilmington

Fundraising for the Can Do Playground is 99% complete with only \$5,680 of our \$464,300 budget still needed. We are confident that we will raise enough to fully fund this wonderful playground.

Warmer spring weather is upon us and the State Parks and Recreation division has begun site preparation. Because of the special purpose of this playground, the site has to be carefully prepared, so that the specialized rubberized surface and concrete walkways that will allow wheelchairs to be safely used throughout 70% of the playground, can be installed. Elaborate underground drainage systems will also be installed as part of the site preparation work. Once the site has been prepared, the equipment will be installed. All systems will be tested and safety inspected before the playground is scheduled to open in mid-July. We are preparing a festive grand opening, complete with families, Ronald McDonald and a host of dignitaries on hand.

Contact lists are being updated and planning is underway for the grand opening that will cap an extensive and wonderful experience for everyone involved. If you are not on our mailing list, or we have your name or address incorrectly written, or if you'd like to make a contribution to help put us over the top, please email us at www.candoplayground.org to give us corrected information.

Visit us at: www.candoplayground.org