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# Dozens welcome playground into neighborhood

By Kevin Haas  
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**BELVIDERE** — A little rain didn't stop dozens of kids from taking advantage of their first opportunity to have fun on the city's newest playground Friday.

About 100 people gathered to celebrate the new playground at Bob's Park, bordered by Meadow and Locust streets and Warren and Nebraska avenues.

Marsha Stacy said kids in the neighborhood often played in the streets before the park was built.

"It's going to give them something to do and be out of the streets," Stacy said while watching her three kids play on a seesaw. "We're very, very grateful."

Dozens of people from around the community chipped in by spreading mulch, digging holes before construction, donating supplies and feeding workers, and safeguarding the unfinished playground at night



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UAW Local 1268 members Bobbie Roberts (left) and Mary Scalzitti clean slides as they volunteer Friday at the new Kids Around the World playground in Belvidere.

until construction was complete. The project was a joint effort between the Parks and Conservation Foundation and Kids Around the World.

A \$52,000 grant sponsored

by former Belvidere Township Supervisor Bob Turner, who died April 22, and the Belvidere Township Board, helped pay for the equipment. Additional money was

raised by the foundation. The land was purchased by the Belvidere Park District with the help of Robert Howells, for whom the park is named.

Matilde Flores said kids would go across Main and State streets to get to Doty Park before the new playground was built, requiring young children to cross often busy streets.

"I'm very happy that finally we have this park right across from our house," said Flores, who made piñatas for Friday's celebration and provided lunch to volunteers working during the week.

Thomas Kendall, 10, who also lives across the street from the park, got the honors of cutting the ribbon and officially opening the playground. Kendall needed only two words to sum up how often he'll use the playground.

"Every day," he said.

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