



Children with Disabilities Deserve Equality

by Christina Mills

Playing with peers and meeting your first childhood friend often comes from that weekend trip to the playground at the park, but what happens when you're a child that uses a wheelchair or you're a parent with a child that uses a wheelchair? Up until recently there was nothing universally accessible about playground. Instead, children with disabilities were forced to watch their peers because of the inaccessibility.

"As a child I can remember my Mom always having a hard time explaining why I couldn't play on the playground with my peers, eventually we just stopped going there," says Megan Brooks, a college student born with cerebral palsy.

"As if facing the beach inaccessibility wasn't bad enough, there was just one thing after another that I was not able to demonstrate my abilities at," explains Brooks.

Watching the kool-aid smiles on children's faces as they raced down the slide or built sandcastle was not only difficult, but also one of the first times Brooks can remember feeling like she was different from the rest of the children. "Children with disabilities have the right to equality!" says Maria Garcia, a High School student who has been faced with accessibility challenges most of her life. Children with disabilities are faced with the same struggles everyday.

Here in San Diego County we're working to eliminate the number of children feeling unempowered by inaccessibility. The City of Escondido City Council just last month decided to be the first in the northern part of the County to build a "Boundless Playground". The location of the Boundless Playground will be located at Kit Carson Park.

Boundless Playgrounds were first thought of by a Connecticut couple who had not only seen a young wheelchair user in a local park staring at the other children while playing, but also because they had a son that past away due to Spinal Muscular Atrophy.



What began, as inspiration was soon a reality. The first, Boundless Playground was completed in 1996 and was named "Jonathon's Dream", after the couple's son. Since then, Boundless Playgrounds have been the ways of our future. As the disabled community continues to advocate for equality, not only will Boundless Playgrounds be universally accessible, but so will our society as a whole community.

For further information on Boundless Playgrounds please go to, www.boundlessplaygrounds.org.

If you have questions concerning the up and coming Boundless Playground in The City of Escondido you can contact, Joyce Materson of The City of Escondido Americans with Disabilities team at (760) 839-4621.