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RECYCLE THIS PAPER

Wainwright Park: the heart of the neighborhood is back

by Mary Rutkowski

A crowd of 200 families and residents gathered in Wainwright Park on Sunday, November 2 to celebrate the recently completed renovations restoring the park as their neighborhood's heart. A once outdated and dangerous playground and recreational area, the park has been transformed into a clean, safe and creative gathering spot for everyone from tots to teens and their parents.

The renovations of Wainwright involved countless hours of organization between community groups and the architecture firm of Brown & Rowe of Boston. The key neighborhood groups involved with the work were Park Partners and All Saints Church of Talbot Street, represented at the ceremonies by Rev. Bill Loesch and Rev. Paul Peterson, respectively. The groups' input was transformed into reality by Brown & Rowe landscape architect, Joanne Hiromura. Included in the renovations, which cost \$150,000, were a half basketball court for younger basketball enthusiasts, flower and shrub beds and two



Wainwright Park has new, safe equipment and surfaces for kids of all ages. Photo by Mary Rutkowski.

new beautiful playgrounds -- one geared toward toddlers and the other for older children.

Watching the day's festivities, Hiromura commented on the process. "We spoke to the community members and found out what kind of play areas they wanted. They wanted something very colorful. The parents also wanted plenty of space between the lot and the older children's playground. I am also a mother and watching my daughter play definitely influenced some of the choices I made for the playground."

Included in these choices was the equipment for the playground, a colorful blend of swings, ramps,

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Wainwright Park brings neighbors out

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slides for all ages, lowers, bridges and an imitation motorcycle with sidocar and truck complete with steering wheel, manufactured by Maxidex, Inc. The unique playground equipment is unlike the currently popular wooden playgrounds seen throughout the city; its airy and open feel, with clear visibility between structures allows parents to supervise their children easily.

In addition, two safety gates that lock and prevent toddlers from wandering away and a thick layer of sand below the equipment protects the children against injury.

Gregory Walters, who brought his son Gregory, Jr. to the festivities, is a new Codman Square resident and expressed his satisfaction with the changes. "I think it's a good start for the re-development to focus on the kids. It's great for them. The Parks Department is doing a great job. It's a good feeling to come outside with my

child and have him use a new playground."

Community organizer, Karimah Rashid added, "I attended the initial meetings about the park and it's great to see it done. The old park was so dangerous. I really enjoy having this new park here and it feels so much safer. I have children ranging from 4 to 16 years and they all use the park. My twelve-year-old loves the smaller basketball court!"

The opening day's activities included appearances and speeches by Mayor Flynn and Parks Department Commissioner Lawrence Dwyer. In addition, plaques were awarded to a number of neighborhood participants and to Brown & Rowe, but the day definitely belonged to the children. A DJ playing rap tunes and funk, a balloon animal artist and all the cookies you could eat allowed the Wainwright children and their parents to take back their park and cheer their beautiful new spot to play in.