



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## NEWS RELEASE



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### RENOVATED WILLOWBROOK COUNTY PARK PLAYGROUND OPENS

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services is proud to announce the opening of the newly renovated playground and installation of new play surfacing at Willowbrook County Park in Honor of Sergeant Damon Gutzwiller, a 14-year veteran of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office killed in the line of duty on June 6, 2020.

The new playground and play surfaces are the result of a collaboration of County of Santa Cruz, County Park Friends and the Santa Cruz County Deputy Sheriff's Association. The newly upgraded playground features a state-of-the-art structure with climbing apparatus, a rope ladder, and a slide.

"Step-by-step, we are getting closer to fulfilling the promise to reimagine Willowbrook Park in Damon's honor," Supervisor Zach Friend said. "These improvements provide for a safer, more accessible play area for our community and ensure that future generations of kids visiting the park can create the joyful memories that playgrounds uniquely bring. I have spent countless hours with my son on this playground and look forward to watching him play with friends on the new structure and beautiful surroundings."

"We hope this playground will provide years of memories to Damon's family and all families," Santa Cruz County Parks Director Jeff Gaffney said. "The renovations at Willowbrook are an example of what happens when a community comes together, and this project will serve as a fitting memorial to Damon's service and sacrifice."

Renovations at Willowbrook County Park in honor of Sergeant Damon Gutzwiller are supported by a successful community fundraising project that contributed \$400,000 in donations from local organizations and individuals. Continued improvements will include a memorial area with donor bricks and engraved pavers, a reflection bench seating area and new landscape plantings, and prior upgrades include resurfacing of the tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts and entry enhancements.

For more on Santa Cruz County Parks, visit <http://scparcs.com>. For a list of major donors and more information on the project, visit <https://www.countyparkfriends.org/willowbrook.html>.