



County of Santa Cruz

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PRESS RELEASE

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FUNDRAISING FOR LEO'S HAVEN PLAYGROUND UNDERWAY

Today, the Santa Cruz Playground Project and its partners -- Shane's Inspiration, Chanticleer Park Neighbors Association and the County of Santa Cruz -- unveiled the long-awaited designs for Santa Cruz County's first universally accessible playground, LEO's Haven at Chanticleer Avenue Park.

In keeping with the park's history, the playground is designed with a farm theme. Separate play spaces for children ages 0-5 and 6-12 provide interactive and sensory-rich experiences for all in a setting that supports multi-generational play. Playground features include a sensory touch wall, a farmer's market, a "wee-saw," accessible and traditional swings and slides from which to descend from the playground's multi-level barn structure.

"The true measure of a community is whether it serves all members, and this playground is accessible to all children no matter their physical abilities," said Patricia Potts, a local parent and founder of LEO's Haven. "There are too few playgrounds like this in our region, so for many families this is a dream becoming reality."

Sunday's event marks the kickoff of major fundraising campaign to raise \$1.93 million to finance the playground, bathrooms and a parking lot. Local businesses, individuals, and organizations such as the Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary Club have already pledged to donate, but the project's success will depend upon the community's engagement.

"This park will always be defined by the many helping hands that have created it thus far. Our community now has a chance to express our values by helping make this all-inclusive playground a reality," Supervisor John Leopold said.



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LEO's Haven started as a dream for Bob and Patricia Potts, whose children are the playground's namesakes: Lauren, Evelyn and Oliver, who uses a wheelchair. It was these siblings' wish to play together that drove the grass-roots effort to design, fundraise, and build a universally accessible playground at Chanticleer Avenue Park.

LEO's Haven would be incorporated as part of Chanticleer Avenue Park, which is being developed to serve Mid-County. Chanticleer Avenue Park is located in Live Oak, a diverse, unincorporated community and one of the largest neighborhoods in the county. Live Oak is home to higher-than-average numbers of families with small children, people living in poverty, elderly residents and people with disabilities. There is no developed public park within the recommended one-half-mile around the Chanticleer Park neighborhood. Chanticleer Avenue Park has an approved master plan which, in addition to the playground, includes an off-leash dog park, community garden, bicycle pump track and other park features.

"The County Parks Department is excited to welcome LEO's Haven as we work together on a park design to serve the needs of all of our visitors," Santa Cruz County Parks Director Jeff Gaffney said.

Another major driving force behind the playground is Shane's Inspiration, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building universally accessible playgrounds throughout the nation and beyond. Shane's Inspiration partnered with The Santa Cruz Playground Project and will serve as the non-profit fiscal sponsor and playground designer. Park renderings feature the work of Diane Scanlan, Shane's Landscape Architect and Director of Design. The plans are detailed beautifully in the sponsorship magazine distributed at today's kick-off event.

Anyone wishing to donate may go to www.santacruzplaygroundproject.org. You may follow the campaign on Twitter @sc_playground or through the hashtag #AllKidsNeedToPlay. You can also visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/santacruzplaygroundproject.