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Photos by Steve Spoden

Celebration at Hammerschmidt School

IT WAS COLD and windy Saturday morning but that didn't stop an army of young volunteers from helping spread mountains of mulch around the newly erected playground equipment in the WHS Learn + Play Gardens at Lombard's William Hammerschmidt School, 617 S. Hammerschmidt Ave. The mulch spreading was part of Saturday's celebration of the completion of phase 2 of the green playground. See story and another photo on Page 2.



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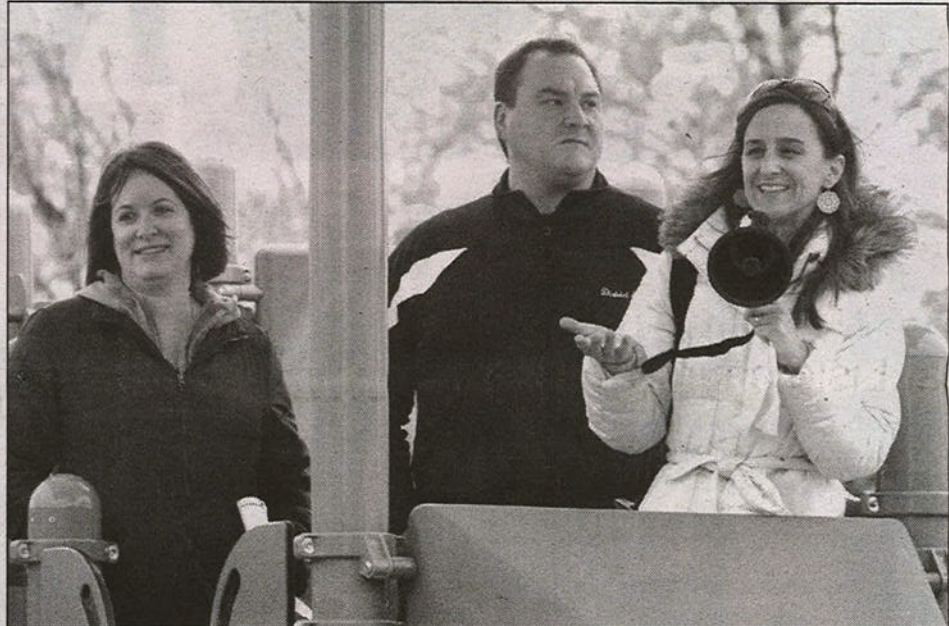


Photo by Steve Spoden

MELISSA PAYNE, principal of William Hammerschmidt School; Ted Stec, assistant superintendent of finance for District 44; and Andi Cooper, project chair (l. to r.) are pictured atop a piece of playground equipment as they speak during the opening of Phase 2 of the new green playspace at the school. Phase 3 of the project is slated for summer 2015, when a butterfly garden, native plantings, outdoor musical instruments, walking paths and amended playfields will be added.

Mulch spreading marks opening of Phase 2 of green playspace

Following two-and-a-half years of designing, fundraising and building, Lombard School District 44 and the William Hammerschmidt School Learn + Play Gardens Committee hosted a celebration at the school Saturday to officially open Phase 2 of the new green playspace—the playground equipment.

Before and after a brief opening ceremony, student and parent volunteers, including members of Cub Scout Pact 42, participated in a “mulch spreading” around the new play equipment to ensure safe usage of the structures.

“I think [the new playground] has a lot of awesome looking structures on it. The new blue slide with the rollers on it looks the coolest,” said student council vice president Ryan Junior. “Since I am a fifth grader, I am just glad it will be finished before I have to leave Hammerschmidt.”

The second phase of the Learn + Play Garden project follows the successful installation of the Edible Gardens in 2013. The Edible Gardens allow each grade to plant fresh vegetables, herbs and flowers in their own raised beds. Each grade determines what to grow, plants their own seeds and harvests their crops. The students learn how to make healthy recipes from their harvest and are allowed to take a share of the crops home.

“This project is a milestone for Lombard School District 44. Our families and community have worked tirelessly to raise funds and make this dream a reality,” said Ted Stec, District 44 assistant superintendent of finance. “Working

together with our community partners like the Lombard Park District and DuPage Community Foundation, we are able to improve the amenities we offer our kids.”

The third and final phase of the WHS Learn + Play Gardens will incorporate a butterfly garden, native plantings, outdoor musical instruments, walking paths and amended playfields. Green infrastructure technologies, including rain gardens and permeable concrete will reduce flooding and standing water on the campus. This final phase of the project is expected to be completed during the summer of 2015.

The WHS Learn + Play Gardens project is the green playground at William Hammerschmidt School. It is an outdoor community amenity that focuses on health and fitness. It also provides a place where students and families can connect to the outdoors, and learn about growing healthy food and conservation.

The WHS Learn + Play Gardens has the support of many community members and organizations, including the William Hammerschmidt school community, principal Melissa Payne, Lombard School District 44, former school principal David Danielski, the Lombard Park District, the Village of Lombard, the PEP Foundation, Healthy Lombard and the The DuPage Community Foundation.

WRD Environmental and Manhard Engineering provided design and engineering solutions.