

## Play area for everyone, but features access for special needs kids



By Dawn Jones

HOLLY (WJRT) -- (07/23/08)--Students in one Mid-Michigan school will return to class this fall to find a brand-new playscape on their school grounds.

It will be extra special for many Holly School District students because it will their first experience with sliding and swinging.

They carefully cut the ribbon Wednesday to officially unveil a whole new playing experience.

"It starts with them and it's for them," said Laborers International Union of North America Local 1076's Bill Bass. "Every kid -- no matter what the circumstances -- deserves a place to play."

"And you probably saw some children this morning going up it with wheelchairs and with walkers, and there are many things on the way up," said Holly School District Special Services Director Janet Stack-Miller.

"They may not be going to slide down a pole, but they can access many of things that are sensory things that they can use all along the way, like driving a car -- using all kinds of activities -- and most of them are able to go down the slide."

It's a playground for all students, but it was designed to also provide access for special needs students at Karl Richter School in Holly.

"The first time to see the kids who had probably never gone up on a playground structure before, they just were amazed themselves that they could do this," Stack-Miller said.

"This is very exciting for us."

The \$58,000 playground was made possible by members of the Laborers International Union of North America Local 1076.

"We not only build the infrastructure and the roads and the factories, we (also) build the communities," Bass said.

"We live here we work here and anything we can do to give back we try to do."

And this generous gift by the union is one that will keep on giving for generations to come.

"With this donation of this beautiful structure, it's just a dream come true," Stack-Miller said.

"It would have taken us many years to ever develop anything of this magnitude and we appreciate it so much."

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