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Park gets new playscape

■ Playground will cater to both fully abled and disabled children

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Of The Oakland Press

Kids who have disabilities and those who don't will be able to play on new equipment being installed at Lakeview Park on the city's north side.

The large playscape with four slides, several decks, climbing ladders, corkscrews and play panels, is a contribution of a labor management coalition — the Local Union 1076 Labor Management Trust.

Mike DeVargilio, business manager for Construction Craft Laborers Local Union 1076, said a member of the trust proposed the idea when he noticed the need for play equipment at the park on Lakeview near Montcalm and Baldwin.

Trustees agreed it was a worthy project and voted to contribute \$50,000 for the equipment and construction of the playscape that children of varying degrees of ability can enjoy.

"The main goal is we wanted to put something back into the community — for the children in the communities that our members live and work in," DeVargilio said.

"I think it is a wonderful concept," Pontiac Mayor Clarence Phillips said.

"At a time when we have to watch every penny, it is a welcome facility on our part and especially welcome for the kids that will be able to use it. I really appreciate the coalition ...

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and the fact that it is unique in its accessibilities for children with disabilities," he said.

The trust, which has contributed to several area projects in the past few years, is funded based on hours worked by union members for the contractors associated with the trust.

In the past, the trust has contributed to national scholastic and police endeavors, to Walled Lake Northern football, the gym floor renovation at Pontiac's Living Hope Community Church, to help purchase a horse for Pontiac Police Mounted Division and feed it, two charities and a Girl Scout camp project.

"I think its exciting," Councilwoman Susan Shoemaker said about the Lakeview Park playscape. "I'm very thankful. I think the residents and children in District 3 around Terry Lake have worked hard to clean it up and, if that's the area they are putting it, that is wonderful.

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The new playscape at Lakeview Park should be completed by Friday.

"Honestly, I think it is fantastic that someone took the initiative and moved forward with it," she added.

Councilman Marc Seay, who represents District 3, was not available for comment.

Daniel Wright, president of the Outdoor Fun Store, said there is a transfer point and play panels designed to make the playscape accessible to kids in wheelchairs.

"You can design (playground equipment) more specifically for disabled or fully abled children, and we

prefer to do a mix so you are not segregating children. You try to get children to play together," he said.

The main structure is metal, and there are plastic components such as the slides and play panels.

Triple-ground wood mulch will lie underneath and around the structure to help protect children in a fall.

Two benches and a playground safety sign also will be added.

Despite rain, Wright expects his crew will finish up the project by the end of Friday.

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