
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

August 17, 2016

Ald. Russell W. Stamper, II
(414) 286-2659

Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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Climbing (and swinging) toward fun and hope

*Ribbon-cutting ceremony Sunday at 17th and Vine will open latest MKE Plays
playground rebuild project*

Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II will help host the opening of the newly renovated playground at N. 17th and W. Vine Streets **this Sunday (August 21)** in conjunction with the Cross Lutheran Church Annual Picnic.

Alderman Stamper will be joined by **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, who created the **MKE Plays** initiative, during a **12 p.m. noon ceremony and media event** (ribbon cutting) on Sunday at the park. Members of partner groups and organizations who helped make the project possible will also take part in the ceremony. **Media coverage is invited.**

The park will also be officially renamed Sunday for the late **Johnnie Mae Phillips**, a devoted member of Cross Lutheran Church and a key figure in transforming the park from a nuisance dumping ground to a valuable public city space.

Alderman Stamper said the playground rebuild – a MKE Plays project – was made possible by more than \$225,000 invested from Zilber Family Foundation, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the Fund for Lake Michigan and the City of Milwaukee. ”This project not only shows how revitalizing parks and playgrounds can help boost some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods, but I’m most struck by how many smiling children it will be bringing back to this playground – a safe and attractive place for them to have fun and just be themselves,” he said.

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MKE Plays ribbon-cutting/ADD ONE

“I want to thank the Johnsons Park Neighborhood Association for serving as our lead organization to help organize community residents at meetings and events about this great project,” Alderman Stamper said. “And other partners also made a huge difference in bringing this rebuilt playground to fruition, including Cross Lutheran Church, the House of Peace, UWM Community Design Solutions, Shalom High School, Safe & Sound, and MPD District Three and the Community Prosecution Unit.”

The MKE Plays’ public process – one built on neighborhood collaboration and involvement – was also evident for the 17th and Vine project, Alderman Stamper said. “We had more than 60 citizens attend meetings, 30 completed important surveys, and 15 people came out and participated in build-day,” he said.

Alderman Murphy expressed his thanks to Alderman Stamper and the community partners for their willingness to work with MKE Plays and for staying engaged throughout the process.

“I would also extend a special ‘thank you’ to the Zilber Family Foundation for making this one of the first funded parks in the MKE Plays program,” Alderman Murphy said. “Their generosity, along with other funders, helped transform this corner of the city to one that is inviting and inspires play and physical activity in both kids and adults.”

“We envision a city with play areas whose condition is not determined by the ZIP code or district they are in, but rather are equally equipped to inspire a child’s imagination regardless of where they are located in the City of Milwaukee,” Alderman Murphy said.

MKE Plays aims to transform the city’s most deteriorated playgrounds into models for local collaboration and renovation over a three-year period. The program is accomplishing this vision by matching private funds with public dollars, involving community residents in the design and construction process, and by evaluating the impact of program activities on the lives of communities.

The 17th and Vine playground is the third of 12 projects to be completed across the city by the end of next year. Other completed projects include those at Arlington Heights, 67th & Spokane, and Marcus DeBack (anticipated on August 25). Three others are in the planning stage and should be completed this year.