



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Vale-Asche Foundation Playground Levels the Playing Field for Children with Disabilities

Playgrounds Without Limits is Gift from Mayor for All Houston's Children

HOUSTON—Mayor Bill White and Dr. Carolyn Farb announced the opening and dedication of **The Vale–Asche Foundation Playground at Memorial Park (across from the Memorial Park Golf Course), from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 16, 2006.** The Houston Parks and Recreation Department, with Dr. Farb serving as Chair, organizes the Playground Without Limits project.

There are not many playgrounds in the U.S. where children with wheelchairs or with other disabilities can play and enjoy being children. But that is changing in Houston. The Vale–Asche Foundation Playground surpasses ADA accessibility guideline by providing playground ramps, transfer systems and rubberized surfaces to address mobility issues for children with wheelchairs. Braille and sign panels encourage children to learn from and interact with each other. Three covered and accessible picnic areas surround the playground, providing places for families to gather and share in the family trip to the park.

“This Holiday present to Houston will provide play opportunities for children of all abilities. Here, all children will be able to interact, learn from each other, become friends and grow into adults who will accept and embrace our differences,” said Mayor White. “We thank all our Playgrounds Without Limits partners and contributors who have made this dream a reality.”

Philanthropist, Dr. Carolyn Farb, has chaired the “Playgrounds Without Limits” campaign since its inception. “Experts agree that children learn through play. It is how they develop language skills, decision-making abilities and social strategies as well as physical, sensory and cognitive strengths,” said Farb. “This inclusive playground creates a safe environment where children of all abilities can enjoy childhood, build friendships and develop social skills. I know that this playground will bring joy to thousands of children in Houston for decades to come.”

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The goal of the campaign is to build three “Playgrounds Without Limits” throughout Houston based on Houston Park and Recreation Department facilities and their proximity to large concentrations of people with disabilities. The Vale–Asche Foundation Playground at Memorial Park is the first playground to be completed. The other two targeted sites are The West Gray Adaptive Recreation Center, located at 1475 West Gray, and Tidwell Park, located at 9720 Spaulding.

The “Playgrounds Without Limits” campaign grew from a number of initiatives, including the Mayor’s recognition that there were limited play opportunities for children with disabilities in Houston, the First Annual Townhall Meeting for People with Disabilities held in April of 2005 and the addition of an Adaptive Recreation Division to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. Founding partners include Dr. Carolyn Farb, City of Houston Mayor’s Office, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Houston Parks Board and the Houston Association of REALTORS®. To donate to the “Playgrounds Without Limits” campaign, please visit www.houstonparksboard.org/play.htm.

For more information on the “Playgrounds Without Limits” campaign or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, please call (713) 845-1135 or visit www.houstonparks.org.