



# LEAVE A LEGACY

**FROM BUILDING PLAYGROUNDS TO PLANTING TREES, CELEBRATE YOUR CLUB'S ANNIVERSARY WITH A HIGH-IMPACT PROJECT.**

*By Vicki Hermansen*

So your Kiwanis club has a big birthday coming up. What are you going to do to celebrate all the ways your club has helped your community over the past 25, 50, 75 and even 100 years?

You could go low-key with a luncheon, dinner or gala, inviting club members and some of the organizations you've worked with throughout your club's history.

Or you could create something big that sparks imagination, learning, play and celebration all year long for your entire community.

This is your moment to go big. To leave a legacy. To put your club out there for everyone to know and see day after day.

**PROMOTE PLAY:  
Build a playground**

Playgrounds. Musical playgrounds. Playground and park revitalizations. Many Kiwanis clubs are leaving a legacy in their community by building a play area, following in the footsteps of the organization's 2015 celebration of 100 years.



Photos courtesy city of Raleigh



227-member-strong club wanted to do something special, says Frances Bobbie, the club's immediate past president.

"We saw the 100th anniversary of Kiwanis in 2015 and knew our club's would be in 2020," says John "Nick" Fountain, co-chair of the club's centennial committee. "We thought we ought to get going."

A survey showed that club members wanted something hands-on, local and worthy of marking 100 years. The club approached

the city to inquire about contributing to a project and landed first on rehabilitating a playground for children of all abilities. The club raised US\$100,000 to help refurbish Sassafras All Children's Playground. But they wanted to do more.

Working with the city, the club

"To celebrate our centennial, we worked with districts around the world that wanted to give the gift of play — a brand new playground — to their communities," says Pam Norman, senior director of Kiwanis International Corporate Relations. "Kiwanis-branded playgrounds were installed from New York to Fullerton, California, with many steps in between, including Chicago, St. Louis and Redmond, Oregon."

Norman says playgrounds are one of the most popular legacy projects for Kiwanis clubs, whether building from the ground up or helping a municipality or school revitalize or rebuild aging parks.

"Play shapes us and (Kiwanis partner) Landscape Structures designs play areas that welcome all ages and abilities, becoming signature gathering spaces for communities and offering innovative and inclusive playground

experiences," Norman says.

Here's what a few Kiwanis clubs are planning for their birthday playground builds.

#### **Raleigh, North Carolina**

The Kiwanis Club of Raleigh set its sights on a big project to celebrate its 100th anniversary. The



Photos courtesy city of Raleigh

*“We had been looking for a signature project and we wanted to do something that would reach a larger group of youth in the community and allow for and provide some inclusivity.”*

landed on renovations at Kiwanis Park.

“It was run down and was in bad shape, but it had our name on it,” Fountain says.

The club’s foundation committed to raise \$125,000 over five years, the city passed a bond issue to cover additional costs. Both leveraged their relationship with Landscape Structures Inc., to take advantage of discounts offered through the Kiwanis partnership and a partnership available to the city. Club members made up the difference when bids came in just above cash in hand.

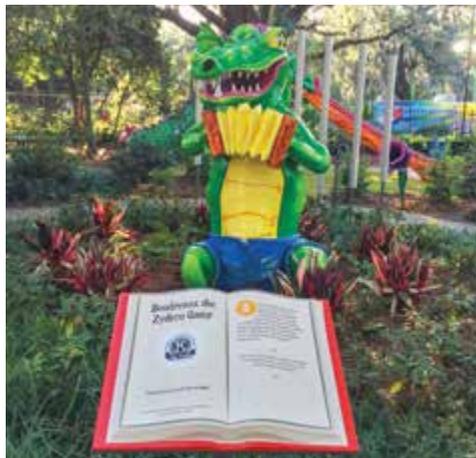
Club members then worked with Kiwanis partner Landscape Structures for the build.

The club held a ribbon-cutting event last fall, celebrating the playground equipment and the city’s contribution of a new building and a new ballfield. When the club’s official anniversary is observed this spring, members will celebrate with a Miracle League baseball game at the new ballfield and assemble an exhibit for the city’s historical museum.

### **New Orleans, Louisiana**

In New Orleans, it was easy to decide a playground theme. Of course it would be music.

To celebrate its 100 years of service to the community, the Kiwanis Club of New Orleans donated \$40,000 to City Park of New Orleans for the park’s first musical playground. The interactive musical playgrounds feature Boudreaux, the Zydeco gator (*below*) who plays an accordion; an oversized xylophone with play-



along sheet music; echo flowers; tubular gongs and a tubed harp.

Anniversary celebrations began in New Orleans in March 2019, during the club’s Centennial Celebration, when they presented a \$40,000 check to Friends of City Park for this musical addition.

“This was for the first musical playground in the park,” says Henrik Pontoppidan, project chair. “Storyland, a beloved iconic playground for the children of New

Orleans since the early 1950s, was getting a much-needed renovation, and our club wanted to give something back to the city and its children. It was a win-win.”

When renovations were complete in September 2019, the club threw a Snoball party at Storyland for all seven Kiwanis clubs in Division 4A in New Orleans, inviting members, their children and grandchildren, and giving them the first go at playing on the new musical playground, says President Mark Firmin.

### **Fergus Falls, Minnesota**

There’s a lot of excitement about the new NP Park playground, says Sarah Duffy, despite questioning her sanity after she proposed the Noon Kiwanis Club would raise

US\$500,000 to pay for the all-ability playground in Fergus Falls.

Thankfully her club is not shouldering the cost alone. As club president last year, Duffy formed a committee with another club member and four community representatives to raise awareness, support and money.

“The city is acting as the fiscal host, and we are all working together,” Duffy says.

The Kiwanis club adopted the