

Rebuilding Together in Indianapolis

Photos by: Sarah Pearson



Children happily play in the newly installed playground equipment on Nov. 5 once the ribbon was cut. The play ground was donated from Carter's Kids Foundation.

by Sarah Pearson
Staff Writer

The children waited anxiously for the ribbon cutting for the installation of the new playground located at 437 N. State Avenue in Indianapolis. When cut on Nov. 5, the children experienced their first moment on their new playground with contentment in their little hearts.

With the Super Bowl coming soon, the Rebuilding Together organization made up of volunteers partnered with Lowe's, Carter's Kids, and CBRE to fix up 10 homes on N. State Avenue, Sturm Avenue, E. Vermont Street and N. Walcott Street in Indianapolis. A new playground was also built for the underprivileged youth of the poor Near Eastside neighborhood.

For the past 13 years in Indianapolis, Rebuilding Together has been getting a group together of several volunteers in April to improve livelihoods in neighborhoods near the city of Indianapolis. They fix unsafe households to insure safer and happier lives at no cost to homeowners.

Tom Pearson has been with Rebuilding Together since it started volunteer work 13 years ago in Indianapolis. As a contractor, he knows much of what needs to be done. Each year he is a house captain which means he is in charge of several volunteers to advise what needs accomplished.

"I enjoy seeing the smiles from homeowners and all the people that are involved donating their time and talents," Pearson said.

The annual event took place once again on Nov. 4 and 5 as a "Kickoff to Rebuild" in honor of the upcoming Super Bowl XLVI to be held in Indianapolis.

The center of attraction of this Pre-Super Bowl Cleanup was the installation of the new playground located at 437 N. State Avenue. An old dilapidated home that once stood there was torn down in order to have space to build the playground for the children of the community. The playground came from Carter's Kids Foundation.

Carter Oosterhouse founded the non-profit organization, Carter's Kids, to help build playgrounds for children. Oosterhouse is the star of HGTV's Carter Can and Red Hot and Green television programs.

"I started this organization four years ago. I wanted to fight childhood obesity and playgrounds are one way to do that. I wanted to give back to the community," Oosterhouse said.

When children have a playground to play on, they are more likely to lose weight and be more active.

"We build about 1 playground each month all around the U.S. We also do one every Super Bowl," Oosterhouse said.

Two hours after the cutting, children were still playing with their new generously donated gift from Carter's Kids Foundation.

"I have been wanting a playground for a long time," Near Eastside Neighborhood child Dustin Wallace said.

It was quite a happy moment for families and volunteers. Neighbors commented on the beauty of the new playground and parents watched with joy as their children happily played.

It was just so evident that the playground would remain a resort for the children of the Near Eastside Neighborhood for many, many years to come.

"Rebuilding Together is a good thing. It helps the neighborhood cleanup and look nice," resident Sarah Wallace said.

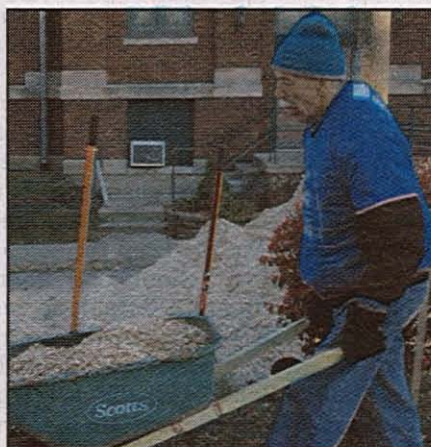
In addition to volunteers mulching and getting everything ready for the opening ceremony of the playground, many volunteers helped fix up homes. These projects included the making of two new sidewalks and painting of interior and exteriors of homes.

Many projects, including the replacements of air-conditioners, windows, and plumbing, were done prior to the Kickoff to Rebuild on Nov 4 and 5 by important heads of Rebuilding Together.

"While the repairs the volunteers will be doing may seem small, it will make all the difference for me and my children," homeowner Tamara Crothers said.

This was the 17th year Rebuilding Together has partnered with other organizations to do a Kickoff to Rebuild prior to Super Bowls across the country. It makes a difference in lives and helps people who can't afford or are incapable to make repairs.

"I just feel blessed and thankful to all these people who want help me," homeowner Lavina Carr said.



From Left to Right: 1. Children of the near neighborhood play on the playground sky runner. 2. Michael Wood lays concrete for a sidewalk of a homeowner on Nov. 5. 3. Volunteer helps move mulch for the playground on Nov. 5. 4. Heads of Rebuilding Together cut the ribbon of the new playground.