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Out2Play constructs new playground for P.S. 96

By Amanda Marinaccio



Marta Garcia, principal of P.S.96, and Councilman James Vacca cut the ribbon for the new playground constructed by Out2Play.

The Richard Rogers School, P.S. 96, finally has the playground the school, administration and students feel they deserve.

Out2Play, a nonprofit organization created in 2005, constructed the new P.S. 96 playground. Out2Play has completed about 40 projects to date, and hopes to complete close to another 40 in the next year.

Funding for the project was provided by a \$ 175,000 grant secured by Councilman James Vacca and also through the Audrey and Martin Gross Foundation.

"This is the best part of my job, we want to make sure we pass good laws and that the money we have is well spent in our community. This was a school that did not yet have a functioning playground," said Vacca.

The inspiration behind the playground and schoolyard facility came from the students themselves. Out2Play and P.S. 96 together held a Design Day last fall, when students

were asked for their input and wrote down what they wanted their new playground to incorporate.

P.S. 96 had a small amount of space with which to work, a result of their 22 transportables, an amount more than any other school in district 11. Out2Play was able to work with the allotted space to bring the children what they requested.

"We are very excited about the new playground at P.S. 96. There are temporary classrooms filling a lot of the yard and we were not sure how much of a playground we could actually create," noted Andrea Wenner, executive director of Out2Play. "But in the end, we worked with the school to really maximize the space that was available and give these students a wonderful new area for play."

According to P.S. 96 principal, Marta Garcia, funds were also secured by Vacca to provide the school with new technology materials, giving the school administration the ability to offer more opportunities and programs for students.

"It's through play that children learn how to share and how to respect one another, not to mention the importance of being physically active," noted Vacca. "I want to thank Out2Play once again for transforming a drab courtyard into an active and inviting play space, and I wish P.S. 96 the best as they make the most of their new playground."

The new recreation area includes a two-lane oval track, and inviting jungle gym, a conga line of musically themes ground art, and a multipurpose painted athletic space. The painted athletic space can be transformed or used for sports which require field use, as the students requested in their suggestions.

"We educate the entire child here, and socialization and constructive play is part of that," said the principal of 7 years, Garcia. "This will provide the students a venue for constructive play. This, fun structured playground will give our students the opportunity to socialize and learn how to be kind and respectful."