

# Improved park gets thumbs up

## Kiwanis, Golden K make improvements

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The Janesville Kiwanis Club and the Blackhawk Golden K Club put the finishing touches on their neighborhood park Wednesday.

That is, until they come up with a plan for their next improvement project.

Nearly 50 people attended a dedication ceremony at the park, where the two clubs unveiled a

### JANESVILLE

memorial plaque to honor deceased Kiwanis Club members and raised a flag from the new flagpole.

The Kiwanis clubs adopted the 9.2-acre park at the corner of Pontiac and Holiday drives, formerly a cornfield, in 1991. They have been spending time and money to improve it ever since. Additions to the park include more than 150 trees and shrubs, two pavilions, sidewalks and playground equipment.

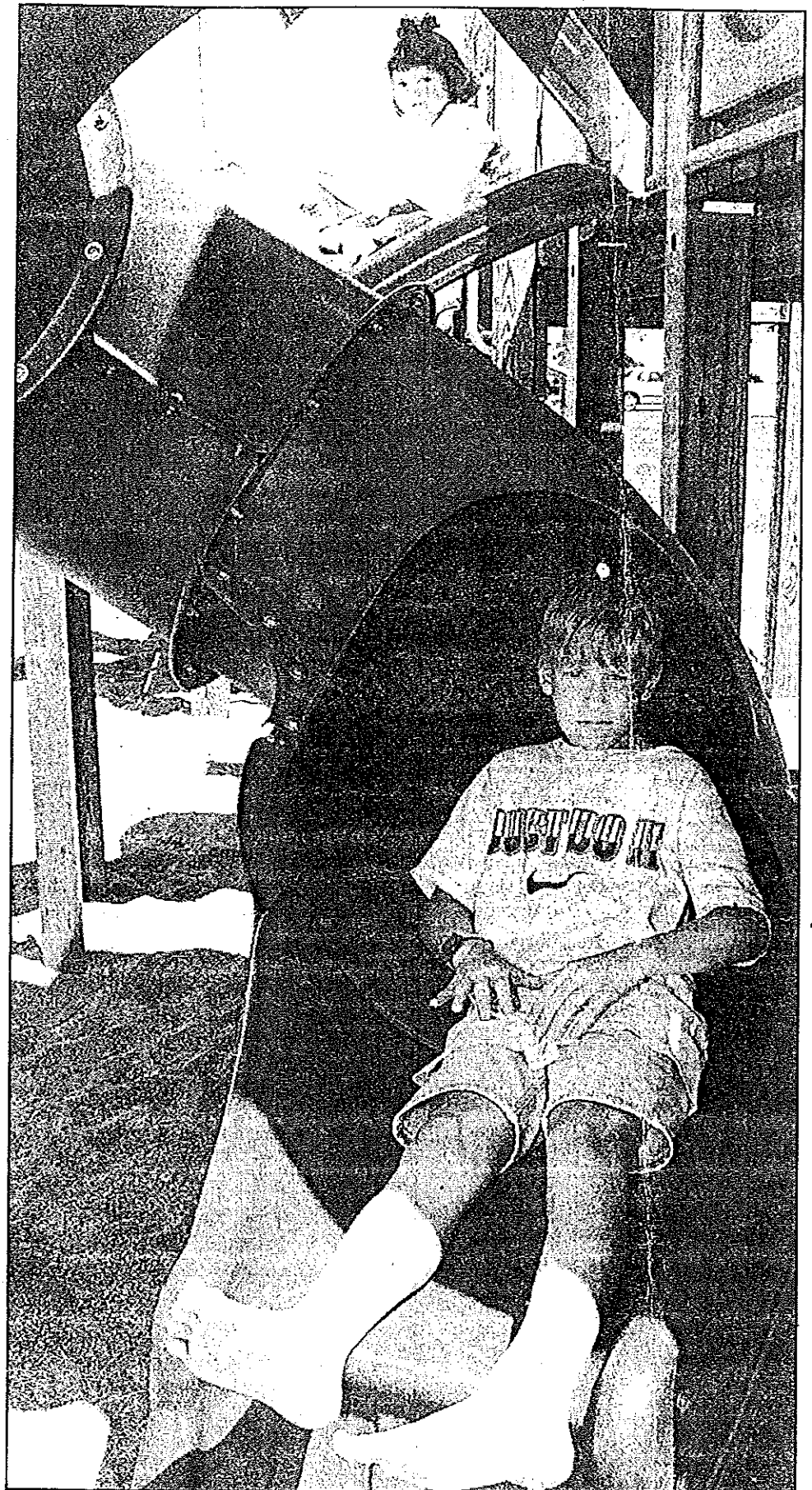
"We've all got something to be mighty proud of," said Marvin Roth, Golden K Club member and master of ceremonies.

The park is a cooperative effort between the neighborhood, the city and the Kiwanis clubs.

"It's an ongoing project," said Joel Moore, Golden K Club president. "The park is a vision of what Kiwanis is all about—children, community and cooperation to get the job done."

No one knows how important Kiwanis Community Park is to his neighborhood more than Philip Konkol.

Philip, 10, lives next door to the park, so he has first-hand knowledge of its facilities, right down to the broken digger. He thinks a screw might be missing. At any rate, it can no longer make big holes in the sand.



Adam Lasker/Gazette Staff

Chais Bailey, 9, lower, and Meredith Konkol, 3, play on slides at Janesville's Kiwanis Community Park.

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# Park/Improved site gets a thumbs up

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"It would be nice to put a new one in," Philip said.

Philip loves the park for lots of different reasons. The Swing-N-Slide is a gigantic play apparatus that includes slides, ladders, firepoles, monkey bars and a rock climber. It's fun for kids of all ages, Philip said.

"My favorite part is going up and down the slide with my little brother," he said. "And the bench is nice because it's in the shade."

The teeter-totter and swings are especially nice for the little kids, he added. One of the swings is made for kids with disabilities. Before the swing was added, "some disabled people came here, and they were really bummed out," Philip said.

One of the boys who comes to the park can't talk, but Philip can tell he enjoys playing on the swing.

"Kids with disabilities ... have their needs, too," he said.

Philip's mom, Beth Konkol, is grateful to have the park next door, except for the occasional knocks on her door by park users in need of a rest room.

"We come here all the time—almost every day," Konkol said.

Karen Schonhoff, whose 2-year-old daughter, Emily, rides her bike to the park, said other parks in the city are too far from home.

"It's inconvenient to drive to them," she said.

Chais Bailey and his dad, Mark,

come to the park because it's close by and Chais has a lot of friends in the neighborhood.

"This is where he meets 'em all," Bailey said.

The Rev. Harold Kromrey, a Golden K Club member who brought his grandson Dorian to the dedication ceremony, said he likes the park's green space because he can watch Dorian fly kites.

"There's a lot of openness here that you don't have with other parks," Kromrey said.

The best thing about the park is that it's safe, Beth Konkol said. Last year, she noticed a broken slide and called Tom Presny, the city parks director.

"They came out that same day and fixed it," she said.

The park is "the design for the future of our parks," Presny said. The city is working with other neighborhood communities and local service organizations to develop similar parks around Janesville.

"We've just come up with a good recipe," Presny said.

Optimist Community Park, Zonta Park and Briarcrest Park are other examples of community land adopted by local service organizations.

In addition to the park, the Kiwanis Club has donated three other recreational facilities to the Janesville community: the Kiwanis Hike and Bike Trail, the Kiwanis Tot Park and the Kiwanis Pond.