

[Print this Page](#)

[←-back to story](#)

Liam J. Perk Playground opens today, community invited

By TIFFANY REPECKI, trevecki@newspapers.com

POSTED: May 15, 2010

The Liam J. Perk Playground officially opens today at Rotary Park during the inaugural Liam's Family Time Celebration, scheduled from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Construction began March 29 on the playground, which dedicated in the memory of a toddler who was fatally bitten in December by one of his family's pet dogs. Located at 5505 Rose Garden Road, it is nearly 5,000 square feet and the project, with other improvements to Rotary Park, is valued at \$220,000.

According to Henry Posey, spokesman for the Perk family, more than 300 volunteers helped put the playground and other amenities together in time for the final inspections. City officials signed off on the project Wednesday.

"It's hard. It's nice," he said of the arrival of the opening. "There's a little bit of exhilaration but, on the other hand, it's sort of bittersweet. That word means more now than ever before."

The event is free to the public and there is no cost to park. The first 30 minutes will be a formal dedication of the playground with the presentation of the colors and the singing of the national anthem. There will be speeches by public officials, and a links of love ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held.

"The dedication ceremony is going to be full of pomp and circumstance," Posey said. "This part of it is a new beginning for us. This part truly kicks off what we want to accomplish - build awareness about kids and dogs."

On Dec. 22, 2-year-old Liam Perk was severely bitten in the neck by Lloyd, the family's 8-year-old male Weimaraner, at their home on Southeast 45th Terrace. Liam was rushed to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Lee County Animal Services removed Lloyd from the home along with Chessy, a female Weimaraner also owned by the family. Lloyd was euthanized the next day, but Chessy was returned to Liam's parents, Joey and Carrie Perk.

With the help of the Cape Coral Community Foundation, the Perks created the Liam J. Perk Foundation Fund to honor Liam with a playground in his name and to educate parents and dog owners through seminars, events and school presentations, providing a safer environment for kids and dogs as a family.

"We want to do it for the family. We want to do it for the community," Posey said. "It's all about Liam, that's the reason we're doing it in the first place."

After the dedication ceremony, there will be activities and live music, along with educational materials for families on child safety. The focus will be dog bite awareness. There will be face painting, Smokey the Bear, the Lee County Bookmobile, the Cape Coral Fire Truck Tour and helicopters. The Cape Coral Police Department also will be on hand offering fingerprinting for children.

Food, refreshments and ice cream will be available for purchase.

There will also be a raffle and silent auction for a \$500 jewelry store gift certificate, gift certificates to local restaurants and businesses and signed sports memorabilia.

Posey said they are hoping to raise \$20,000 at today's event. The funds will go toward remaining costs for the playground as well as education materials.

Initially, the foundation was creating the materials for kindergartners up to adults, but it was contacted by some interested pre-schools. Posey said the trick is to create something that educates and entertains, and what catches the attention of one age group may not hold the attention of another group.

"Believe it or not, adults are the hardest," he laughed.

On Tuesday, the foundation will test out its materials for the first time at Oasis Charter Elementary. During the course of the day, every class from first grade to fifth will spend some time learning about dog bite prevention.

"We have some great material prepared, but it's really going to give us a chance to tweak it," Posey said.

For more details, contact Laurie Posey at laurie.ljpfoundation@gmail.com.

As for today, Posey promised that the event will be a plus for all families.

"It's a good time to have some good quality time with your family," he said.

Fact Box

To Go
What
Official opening/celebration for the Liam J. Perk Playground
Where
Rotary Park
5505 Roade Garden Road
When
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Why
In memory of Liam J. Perk

A portion of the playground was donated by Playworld Systems Inc., a family-owned playground company based in Lewisburg, Pa. Additional donations were provided by Playmore Recreational Products and Services, Kobayashi Dojo Inc., H.L. Posey Builders, Paint Misbehavin and J. Heather Harris Photography.

To donate to the Liam J. Perk Foundation Fund, contact the Cape Coral Community Foundation at 542-5594 or visit: capecoralcf.planyourlegacy.org.

[Subscribe to Cape Coral Daily Breeze](#)