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Community turns out in memory of Cape child

Liam J. Perk Memorial playground dedicated

By DREW WINCHESTER, dwinchester@breezenewspapers.com

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Hundreds gathered at Rotary Park Saturday for the opening of the Liam J. Perk Memorial playground, honoring the life of the 2-year-old child who died from a dog bite on Dec. 22.

The playground, built with the help of more than 300 volunteers, was constructed in roughly two months and paid for entirely through donations.

Liam's uncle, Henry Posey, said the child's legacy also will live on with his own foundation, a non-profit organization aimed at educating parents and dog owners through seminars, school presentations and events to provide a safe environment for children and dogs in homes, as a family.

"We're about education, awareness, and children's safety and we want to live with our dogs," Posey said. "That's what we've chosen."

Born Dec. 11, 2007, Liam J. Perk died just three days before Christmas last year after being bitten by the family dog, a Weimaraner.

Parks and Recreation Director Steve Pohlman praised the Perk family for building a playground that will serve many in the community, adding that the Perks have given a great gift to Cape Coral amidst their own tragedy.

"This project is a true labor of love," Pohlman said.

Members of city council and staff were on hand for the dedication, including Mayor John Sullivan, who read a proclamation naming May 15 Liam J. Perk Day.

Councilmember Kevin McGrail told Joey and Carrie Perk he understood their pain, having lost a 3-month-old son to a heart condition.

He said he was moved by community's emotional support of the Perks.

"I'm touched by the outpouring of love from Cape Coral today," McGrail said.

City council members also took turns sliding down the playground's big slide.

To keep the events of that awful loss and the lessons that can be learned in the forefront of the public's view, Posey said he wanted to return to the playground on the same day annually.

"We want to promote our mission and return here each year," Posey said.

For more information on the Liam J. Perk Foundation, visit liamjperkfoundation.org

Article Photos



MICHAEL PISTELLA

One of the 'Links of Love' that encircled the Liam J. Perk Playground at Rotary Park in Cape Coral, Saturday. Thousands of children, some from as far away as Hong Kong, wrote their names and messages on pieces of construction paper, some of which also served in the playground's 'ribbon' cutting. More photos are available online at: cu.cape-coral-daily-breeze.com.

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