

Memorial playground dedicated with children's laughter

BY JL WATSON

jlwatson@news-press.com

Hundreds gathered at Rotary Park on Saturday for the Liam J. Perk Memorial Playground dedication.

The play area at the park honors Liam Perk, a 2-year-old Cape Coral boy who was bitten and killed by a Weimaraner named Lloyd, on Dec. 22, 2009.

Cape Coral council members, Mayor John Sullivan, city leaders and Liam's family spoke at the event.

"Our pain will never go away," Carrie Perk said of her son's death. "Liam's death will never go away.



From left, Zain Abrams, 8, Drew Arman, 10, both of Cape Coral, and Zane Eckols, 9, of Virginia, play Saturday at the Liam J. Perk Memorial Playground in Cape Coral. Eckols is Perk's cousin. Perk was bitten and killed by a family dog in December.

Let us educate you, and hope your family will continue to be safe." The Perk family, along

with Carrie's brother, Henry Posey, are putting their efforts into safety and education for families with canines.

Henry Posey addressed the crowd from the large piece of playground equipment more than 300 volunteers helped erect.

"The playground is where everything starts," Posey said. "We want to continue to promote safety."

Posey, who has acted as the family spokesman numerous times since the accident, said a simple "thank you" didn't seem enough for all the support the family has received.

The park, which features equipment designed

for children, also includes fitness stations on the perimeter designed for individuals 13 and older.

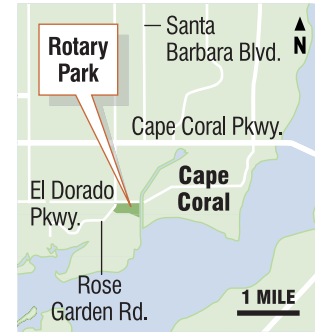
Councilman Kevin McGrail said he lost a 3-month-old son to a heart condition, giving him a perspective shared by parents like the Perks.

McGrail said the park was a reminder of good moments still to come.

"This park today is about life," he said. "It's about love. It's about joy."

Steve Pohlman, director of parks and recreation for the city of Cape Coral, said the park will benefit everyone.

"It's a tremendous gift to the city," Pohlman said.



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TO DONATE

The project still needs funding. To donate, go to capecoralcf.planyourlegacy.org or call 542-5594.

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Photos: View a gallery of more images of the playground



PHOTOS BY JESSIE VEGA/THE NEWS-PRESS

Above, Estero Fire Department spokeswoman Susan Lindenmuth introduces her Dalmatian fire dog, Ember, to Brooke Young, 4, and her mom, Judy, 45, during the dedication of the playground.

At left, parents and their children enjoy the new playground Saturday in Cape Coral.