

More Than Just a Playground

Have you seen the Playground Plans yet?

News from the Board

You have probably seen the exciting plans for Mothercraft's new playground in the lobby, and we are sure you will agree it is an exciting and creative approach to creating an amazing space for our children to play and learn in!

Mothercraft is a special place, our children have extraordinary experiences here, and we need a special playground to foster the values we hold dear and provide a safe and accessible yard for all children who

spend their early years here. The goal for the playground at Mothercraft Ottawa is to transform our current playgrounds into a natural outdoor educational environment for the children and provide a safe, beautiful and accessible canvas for creative play.

The playground renewal has been in the works since 2005, and at this point we have completed the professional plans and the grading of the preschoolers play area which was accomplished with the

help of Ronald McDonald Charities of Canada.

Working with parents, caregivers and staff, our playground designer developed a plan that will meet the children's needs at low cost for years to come.

Features of the new play yard will include improved drainage, more space for the toddlers, new interactive play spaces to challenge the

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Hello K.T. Cat!

Mothercraft Ottawa is honoured to have been chosen by renowned child development specialist Kathleen Guy for the launch of her new interactive learning toy, K.T. Cat.

K.T. Cat is a delightful plush toy that wears pajamas for night time activities and sports a jaunty cape for daytime adventures. The doll is intended to be both a snuggling friend and a tool used to act out stories

during reading time with parents or caregivers.

Studies show that interactive reading increases the learning experience of the child, and K.T. Cat is ideally suited to help. Personalized stories and activities on the web site will enhance the experience!

Available exclusively at Play Value (Carling & Kirkwood). A portion of sales support Mothercraft Ottawa.

Coming Events

The Gingerbread Event November 23, 2008

Join us for another magical day of gingerbread, sweets, prizes and fun! 1 ticket seats two builders \$25 unassembled, \$30 assembled. Call 728-1839 x500 for more info!

K.T. Cat Launch 1:30 pm November 12, 2008

K.T. Cat helps children and caregivers make the most of their "us time".

Join us at Mothercraft as we welcome child development specialists Kathleen Guy and Dr. Fraser Mustard for the Ottawa launch of K.T. Cat.

Orgasmic Birth Screening 7 pm December 5, 2008

What would happen if women were taught to enjoy birth rather than endure it? Screening and panel discussion at St. Paul's University auditorium. Tickets \$10 available at the door. Proceeds support Ottawa Midwifery Consumers Group and the Birth and Parent Companion Program. Call 613-722-8642 for more info.

Prefer to receive this news by email? Send a note to Rachel@mothercraft.com

United We Play

You give of yourself every day, why should you give you money to support the United Way? Because we are so lucky to be here, to have the supports we have in our lives, because the impact of giving is two-fold. When we give, even the smallest amount, it joins thousands of other donations that stay here in Ottawa and make possible programs like food banks, camps, hospices, seniors services and The Birth and Parent Companion Program. When we give, we also receive the feeling that we have contributed, done as much as we can, that we are caring for our community and protecting those we love from being in need and not being able to receive due to program shortfalls.

Did you know that you can designate the charity and program to which your United Way donation goes each year? This means, your designation can help us play in the green, and help us serve through the Birth and Parent Companion Program.

Playground Cont.

children, a water play area, pathways, trees and other natural elements like rocks and logs for the children to climb on, and interactive learning areas like court games, a stage, a vegetable garden, and an art area. The best part of these plans is that they are highly maintainable at low cost, are not subject to changing safety regulations and allow all children access to all elements of the yard.

While the work has begun, some areas of the play yard remain muddy, bleak, and do not present a stimulating or challenging environment for the children. Due to the lack of drainage (flooding in the spring and icy in the winter), we often need to restrict access to the play yard for the toddlers for their own safety. Without shelter to provide shade on hot summer days, no learning centres or creative play areas, and a real lack of vegetation and landscaping, the play yard needs much more work done. These conditions create limited usage opportunities, do not stimulate creative play and affect the equality of access to yard play for our special needs children. Those parents who have seen the amazing transformation so far in the preschoolers yard must be excited to see the final result!

More vegetation (trees, shrubs, flowers) and environmental elements such as a rain barrel, pond, compost and vegetable gardens, makes the learning opportunities for the children literally come alive! The new play yards will provide for a more natural setting and will create a dynamic, nurturing, and safe outdoor space for the children. We are looking to create a healthy and sustainable outdoor space which provides optimum opportunities for children to further develop their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. Incorporating composting bins, rain barrels and child maintained gardens, we will give children a rewarding environmentally educational experience while nurturing their creative spirit. Imagine the possibilities!

Mothercraft serves the Ottawa community in many ways, and in looking to the future a completed play yard will help us to enhance those services greatly. While daycare children currently use the playground on a regular basis, we are looking at more ways to invite the community to enjoy this space through free community events and programs such as a children's music festival. What a wonderful way to share this space with the community!

We need your support to complete this transformation, it is your children's community and daily experience and we can make it even more amazing! Please take the time to plant a "flower" in the lobby (Reception can help with this), or add a small amount to your daycare payment each month (Accounting can help with this) every contribution gets us one step closer to our next goal of \$40,000 to complete the re-grading next spring. If you have any amazing fundraising ideas that you would like to do on your own, or if you are interested in joining the Playground Committee, or would like to talk about a major gift, please contact Rachel Horsley Rachel@mothercraft.com.