

## A PLAYGROUND MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

# Kensington Road Elementary

Never underestimate the power of a parent.

Or, in this case, several.

The PTA at this neighborhood school decided that the "no child left inside" movement meant that their kids deserved a fresh, authentic, disability-inclusive way to exercise. The answer: Build a natural playground. Imagine embankment slides built into hills, realistic caves connected by speaking tubes, an integrated climbing wall, and much, much more.

Never mind that it'd be the first of its kind in the state, that the administration wasn't sure it was actually a "playground," or that the insurance company just didn't know what to make of it. Moms Renée Borgos and Rachelle Gormley kept at it, often doing the literal heavy lifting themselves, adamant that where there might have been a few very expensive pieces of plastic and metal, kids standing (and pushing) in line, and disabled students watching from the sidelines (as often happens on traditional equipment), there would instead be energy, excitement, and creativity. Natural play on a natural playground.

Together with loads of help and donations from the community, they accomplished just that.

Designed by Natural Playground expert Ron King of the [Natural Playgrounds Company](#), along with parent input, the Kensington Road site was configured specifically to make the most of the original features of the land.

Moms Gormley and Borgos called it an investment worth making, comparing its cost with the price of a few small pieces of traditional playground equipment.

With most of the remaining materials donated by the community — from stumps, to boulders, to mulch — and time donated by local companies, parents, students, scouts, and more, this playground came in under the projected price for the traditional equipment they originally estimated, even including the commercial embankment slides purchased from the [Natural Playgrounds Company on-line store](#).

"What we got for our money is pretty amazing," says Borgos.



Natural play on a natural playground!



Kids at Kensington spell out their thanks for the parents who helped bring their dreams of fresh, natural, creative, and accessible play to life.



Natural Playground founder Ron King designed a customized plan for Kensington Road Elementary's school grounds.



Where there's dirt, there's a way! It doesn't look like much, but this pile will soon be one of the playground's two grass-covered mounds with built-in slides, climbing walls, and more!



Students pitch in to get the job done.

*Photos by: Kensington Road Elementary*