

NRPA and The Walt Disney Company Bring Play and Physical Activity to More Than 1 Million Children and Families

“Meet Me at The Park Play Spaces” Initiative Exceeds Goal in Just Three Years

UNITED STATES, October 23, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ASHBURN, VA -- When the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and [The Walt Disney Company](#) launched their [“Meet Me at The Park Play Spaces”](#) grant program in 2017, they set an ambitious goal: to bring new play and physical activity projects to more than one million children and families nationwide.

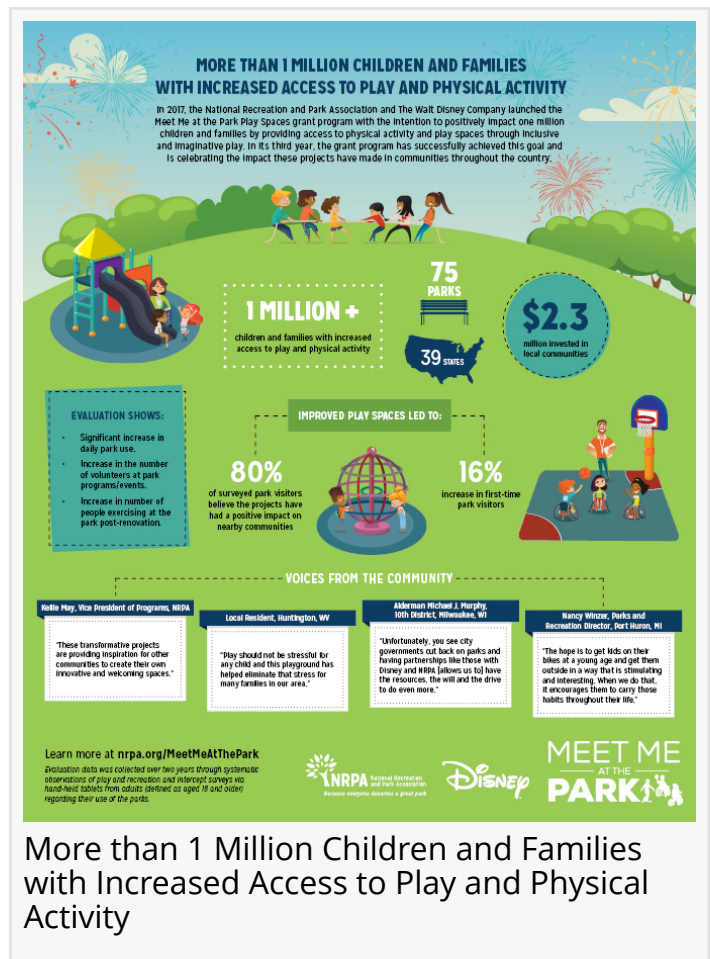
In less than three years, the campaign has surpassed its goal, reaching more than one million children and families in 39 states across the United States. In all, grants totaling \$2.3 million facilitated new projects for 75 parks.

“Parks are absolutely essential to the health and wellbeing of communities everywhere, and we are grateful for the opportunity to increase access to spaces for play and physical activity, in areas where they are needed the most,” said Kristine Stratton, NRPA president and CEO. “These investments will benefit children and families for generations to come.”

Projects created by the “Meet Me at the Park Play Spaces” grant program are varied, imaginative and bring revitalized park spaces to communities that need them most. Improvements funded by the grants range from new playground equipment for the rural Alaska Peninsula community of King Cove (pop. 1,065) to new amenities for a park a continent away in Tampa, Florida, which received new inclusive and accessibility features, including advanced sensory equipment for those with autism or related disabilities.

Post-project evaluations conducted at many of the parks that benefited from the grants have shown significant improvement in daily park use and park-based physical activity, including an increase in visitors engaging in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. First-time park visitors increased by 16 percent, while 80 percent of surveyed park visitors believed the projects had a positive impact on nearby communities. Gains in volunteering rates for park programs and events were also attributed to the new projects.

“This achievement is definitely worth celebrating and also recognizing the inspiring contribution



of The Walt Disney Company to the success of this program,” said Rachel Banner, director of park access for NRPA. “The Disney team brought vision, a commitment to healthy living and the resources to make this important project a reality.”

“Play is central to a child’s growth and development,” said Elissa Margolis, senior vice president Enterprise Social Responsibility, the Walt Disney Company. “Disney is proud to join with the National Recreation and Park Association through the Meet Me at the Park program, in providing access to the innovative and inclusive play spaces that enable and encourage children to play every day — at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods and communities. By working together with NRPA, our team at Disney hopes to make play places more accessible, and inspire kids and families to stay active and have fun.”

This latest achievement builds upon a long-standing history of successful collaboration between The Walt Disney Company and NRPA to make outside play and parks accessible to everyone.

Learn more and see our celebration video at nrpa.org.

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