

KEYE-MALLQUIST PARK AND PLAYGROUND MODERNIZED

When you think of a playground, you think of your own experience as a child. You remember the fun of swinging, going down the slide, or enjoying the merry-go-round. Playgrounds today don't look like the playgrounds from childhood. Once upon a time, asphalt surfaces were common on the playground, as were one-size-fits-all equipment. Today, playgrounds provide softer landings and are designed to create distinct play for toddlers, young children ages two to five, and older kids age five to 12. The last time Keye-Mallquist Park was updated was in 1993, so it was way overdue for an upgrade. One important addition to the new playground will be the accessible component, so every child can enter and play without a challenge.

Keye-Mallquist Park was originally called Southeast End Park in 1911. With the increase in population in the area of 11th Street and 16th Avenue, the Rockford Park District saw the need to bring a park to the neighborhood. In 1913, the first playground was dedicated, and in 1920, famous architect Jessie Barloga designed the shelter. In 1985, the name of the park changed to Keye-Mallquist in honor of Allan C. Mallquist and Francis Keye for their generous donation to the Rockford Park District.

The Rockford Park District Playground Committee began raising funds in 2019 to renovate the park and playground. Through donations from area businesses and individuals, the old playground was demolished in the fall of 2020. The question remained, what amenities should the Rockford Park District replace it with. Who else to better select the equipment but the area children? Last summer, the Park District invited kids and their families to the park and let them decide what they wanted. "It was exciting to see their faces light up as they reviewed the selections," stated Lori Berkes-Nelson, Director of the Rockford Park District Foundation.

This May, children will be running and playing on equipment that they chose. They will be sitting underneath a 100-year-old shelter designed by a famous architect, and most importantly, they will be having fun. More than 90 children attend the playground program at Keye-Mallquist Park each summer. This year, the Park District will be increasing the hours of operation to 11 am to 5 pm for the summer playground at Keye-Mallquist Park. The memories of our childhood playing in the park will continue with this generation in a new park and playground, thanks to countless donors that made it happen. Making memories for a lifetime is what the Rockford Park District is all about.

NEW PARK AMENITIES INCLUDE

- Multi-use open field space
- Renovated ball field
- Renovated basketball courts
- New outdoor fitness area
- New multi-use game court
- New playground with universal surfacing
- New picnic area
- New accessible pathway connections

THANK YOU TO THE KEYE-MALLQUIST PARK DONORS THAT HELPED BRING FUN

- A & B Machine Shop
- Absolute Grinding & Manufacturing
- Aetna Plywood
- Blazer Foundation Of Rockford
- Imperial Punch & Manufacturing
- Specialty Screw Corporation
- John and Kathryn Torrence
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