

NEWS FROM TEXAS SCOTTISH RITE HOSPITAL FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DALLAS--Playgrounds are made for kids--if those kids have legs to pump themselves higher and higher in a swing, or ascend ladder like steps to enjoy the thrill of coasting down a slide, or if they have strong enough arms to climb through a jungle gym or grasp a seesaw. But for the child in a wheelchair, or one trying to balance precariously on crutches, or taking the first steps wearing leg braces, outdoor play has been strictly a spectator sport.

Now, however, Texas children with limited mobility will have a superb park filled with play equipment which is both challenging and accessible, designed with their input to accommodate their capabilities, while fulfilling their fantasies.

The Allan Shivers Park at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children has been called the finest playground in the country for children of limited mobility. Its gates will swing open the end of May to the Hospital's young patients who come from virtually every county in the state, and playtime also will be made available to all area agencies which work with handicapped children.

Dedication of the unique facility is scheduled at 11 a.m., Saturday, May 31. The widow of the former Texas Governor, for whom the park was named will release hundreds of balloons to mark the official opening. Mrs. Shivers will be assisted by 12-year old Austin Jones of Fort Worth, an amputee patient of the Hospital, which currently treats more than 9,200 Texas children with orthopedic, neurological or learning disabilities. Governor Shivers had served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hospital for 12 years until his death in January, 1985.

Speakers at the opening ceremonies will include J.W. Chandler of Houston, the highest ranking Mason in the state, who succeeded Governor Shivers as board chairman, and John Ben Shepperd, Shivers' longtime friend and associate, who served as Texas secretary of state, 1950-1952, and Texas attorney general, 1953-1957. Also on the program will be Jas. F. Chambers, Jr., president of the Hospital's Board, and J.C. Montgomery, Jr., executive vice president. Brian Shivers, son of the late governor, will respond to the tributes to his father and Dallas Cowboys quarterback, Danny White, will tell about the team approach that made the facility possible.

The playground is called "the park that love built," because the design, equipment and labor that produced the \$600,000 facility were provided without charge by organizations and individuals who wanted to make the dream of a disabled child become a reality.

Two years ago, the Lone Star Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers of America, initiated the project by donating an exerglide--a wheelchair-transferable swing which is propelled by the arms. The need for additional play equipment on the Hospital's tree shaded lawn was immediately apparent, and the Pioneers volunteered to raise the funds. The project got off the ground when the Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc., an organization of non-union companies in the construction business, offered to supply the labor and mechanical expertise needed. Employees of these companies volunteered leisure time and some came out of retirement. An honorary engineering fraternity at the University of Texas at Arlington, designed a computer-assisted interactive play center which is housed in one of two domed structures. There, children may operate a control panel which electronically echoes sound and plays light across the walls and ceiling. Many other individuals donated equipment and funds to complete the park.

It is these friends, with their children and grandchildren, who have been invited to the dedication-- an exciting event, with clowns, bands, sno cones, and face painting to provide the gaiety of a circus, enhanced by a typically Texas Sesquicentennial barbeque and six flags display. Special guests will be Byron Nelson, representatives from the Dallas Sidekicks and other area athletes, such as Kent Waldrep, who has overcome a handicap to become an outstanding achiever and role model.

The park, shaded by native oaks and landscaped with flowers and shrubs, is in the center of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital's 12-acre property at 2222 Welborn in Dallas' Oak Lawn area. Children have the option of entering through an alluring tunnel which accommodates youth wheelchairs, or along curved walkways with a skid-proof tennis court surface--walkways wide enough for beds to be wheeled so that traction patients may enjoy the fresh air play area.

In the center is an inviting gazebo of lattice brick design. This is the hub for two ramps--one of wavy cement for a thrilling wheelchair ride, and another with parallel bars at various levels to assist youngsters walking for the first time or rehabilitating after surgery, one of several therapeutic play pieces in the park. One side of the gazebo features a water play area which includes decorative sprinklers and troughs of varying heights which collect the water and afford access by standing toddlers or those in wheelchairs. Other troughs hold play sand.

A toddler play area is equipped with miniature play structures and benches and tables there provide for parents' comfort or a family picnic. Slides are imbedded in the ground and utilize ramps, swinging bridges, tunnel slides, tire swings, ring pulls, a wheelchair maze and a monkey bar. In still another play area, ambulatory children enjoy the challenge of tire climbers, swinging bridges, tunnels and aluminum slides, balancing beams, tire swings and platforms, while a spring pad provides pleasure for children of very limited ability and also offers balance training for those with upper torso problems.

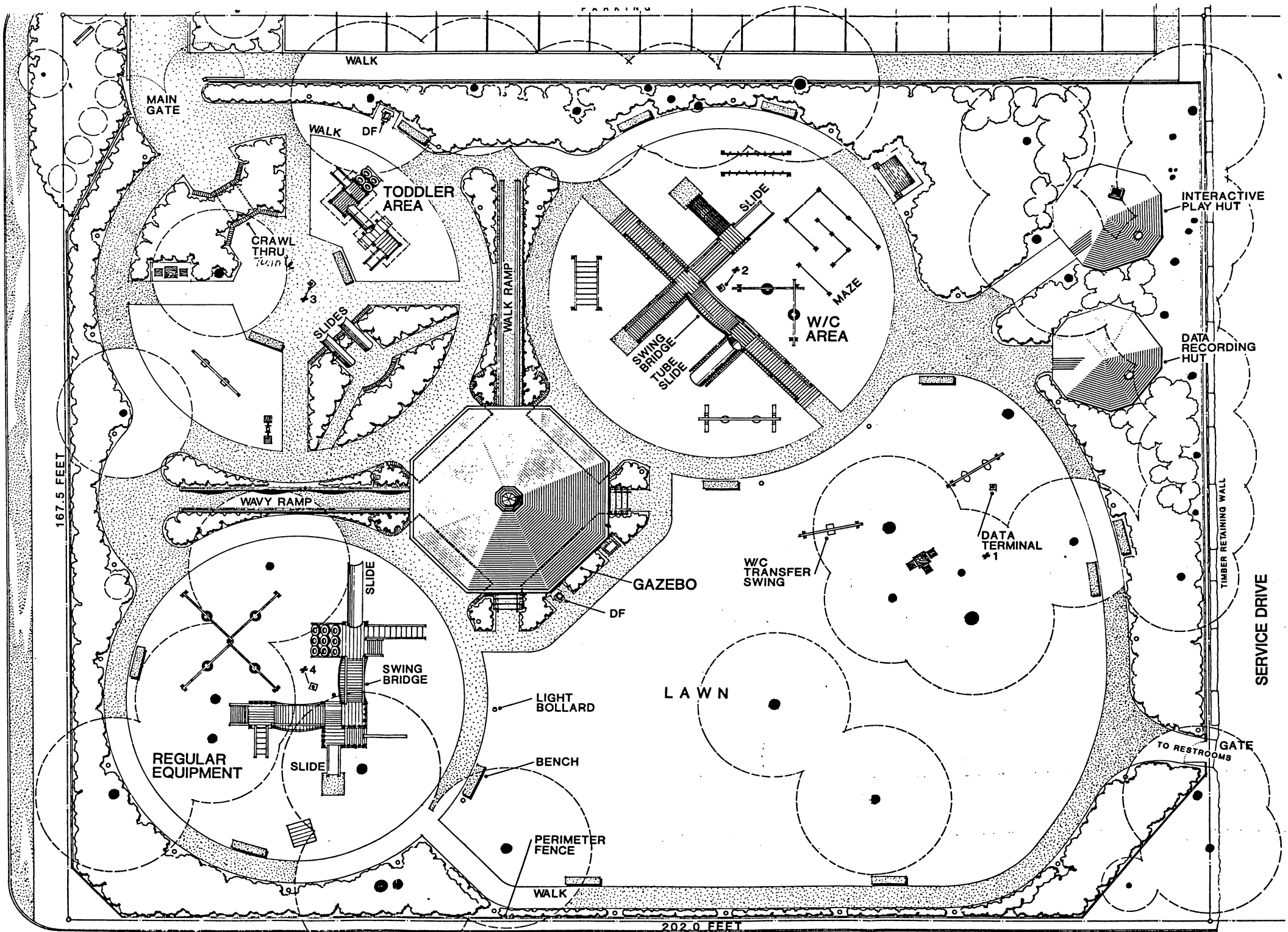
For research purposes, two computer-operated olympic force plates can be placed at various park locations. These plates will assist orthopedic surgeons at the Hospital in determining the amount of force exerted on normal joints during bouncing or jumping activities. While some of the equipment provides therapeutic play, Allan Shivers Park is intended to get children who were once "benched," into the swing of outdoor activities. Whenever weather permits, daily visits are planned for patients, and cookouts with a new gas grill donated by the Hospital's volunteers will revive a tradition from the Hospital's early days.

Staff members and architects from Harwood K. Smith & Partners, Inc., in the early planning stages, visited some of the better known adaptive playgrounds on the East Coast, and Scottish Rite patients were surveyed to learn what they wanted. The Allan Shivers Park benefited from the experiences gained at the Rusk Institute and at St. Mary's Hospital in New York City and at two parks at the Kennedy Institute for Rehabilitation near Boston. There are only a few such parks around, and now Texas boasts the model for any to be built in the future.

At the entrance to the playground, imbedded in cement are the tiny handprints of the children who came out to lend support to friends putting the finishing touches on their park. They are symbolic of the helping hands that have reached out to the disabled children of Texas throughout the 65-year history of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital. Founded by concerned Masons to treat polio victims, the medical expertise in orthopedics and neurology was expanded to a wide range of conditions after Salk and Sabin vaccines brought polio under control. Later, the Hospital pioneered in the diagnosis and treatment of learning disabilities--principally dyslexia, and is internationally recognized for its treatment of all these conditions. Yet no child has ever been charged one penny for treatment in the 65-year history of the Hospital, regardless of the family's financial position. Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children is supported by voluntary contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations.

WELBORN STREET

167.5 FEET



202.0 FEET

SERVICE DRIVE



City of Cambridge

6.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM

IN CITY COUNCIL
October 27, 1986

ORDERED:

That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Community Development Department to look into funds from the state for a playground for handicap children.

In City Council October 27, 1986.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.
Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph E. Connarton", is written over the printed name.

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

Order # 6

P-384

C. Graham order re: City Manager to direct the
Community Development Dept. to look into funds
from the State for a playground for handicapped
children.

In City Council,

October 27, 1986

C. Graham
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