

## Kiwanis Children's Playpark Hastings Rocks

The need for a children's play park on the south coast of the island prompted our involvement with this project and the request to assist with the refurbishment of this popular and historic Hastings Rocks site was grasped enthusiastically. Given its association with children's activities, it was timely to become involved in a project of this nature in our 10th Anniversary year. Hastings Rocks provided the ideal location with its high visibility along Highway 7 and enormous potential to market the work of Kiwanis International in Barbados.



Project plans were presented at one of our club meetings by the Chairman of the Friends of Hastings Rocks Committee, Mr. Ronald Armstrong, during the early months of 1998. This committee, comprised of current and former residents of the area, was formed in 1995 to take on the responsibility for refurbishing the Hastings Rocks. Restoration work has been ongoing for 2 years prior to our involvement.

Over the years, this recreational area, established in the 1890's had fallen into disrepair through neglect. Originally the land was leased from the former navel hospital for the princely sum of \$48.00 per annum, by a Mr. Carpenter who was the manager of the Colonial Bank (now Barclays Bank PLC) and a promenade established and opened in 1897. The property was purchased by

government in 1905 and further developed into the open recreational area it is today. In its glory days, not only was it a place of relaxation for residents and tourists alike but also one of the popular fair-ground sites in Barbados.



And so with strong sentiments, a desire to see its history preserved, \$130K raised through fund raising and corporate and private donations, restorative work in conjunction with two Government agencies, the National Conservation Committee and Tourism Development Corporation commenced. Our involvement came through contact between a club member and Chairman Ronald Armstrong, who found that further assistance was needed with funding the play park. Shortly after Mr Armstrong's 1998 presentation to our club, architect's plans for the area earmarked for play park were handed over, together with preliminary costings of equipment and site preparation.

A project committee chaired by President Elect Maurice Clarke and comprising Distinguished President Trevor Thomas and Director Horace Jordan, commenced research on the types of equipment best suited and costings while they were attending the Annual Kiwanis International Convention in Montreal in 1998.

We entered the design and costing stage and after it appeared our discussions with the original manufacturer were going nowhere, assistance

was obtained from B6b Duffield, President of the Kiwanis Club of North Lake Tahoe. Bob and his wife Jeanie are regular visitors to Barbados and have shared fellowship with us at a few club meetings. Bob placed us in contact with GameTime in Alabama, USA. GameTime's Frank Bette provided invaluable assistance at this stage and designs and estimates which included generous discounts were obtained.

The fund raising phase commenced as soon as the 1998-99 administration took seat. With the targeted cost of the project in view, it was determined that all fund raising for the year would be channelled into the implementation of this project. All members became involved in this fund raising phase through the execution of 5 bingo events, cake sales, sponsored walk and for the first time, the publication of a business calendar and specially designed picture postcards. We also sought donations from corporate entities and individuals specifically for this project.

With assistance from officers of the National Conservation Committee certain equipment was obtained and help given by staff of this organisation with some of the heavier and more technical work.

Funds to purchase the equipment were remitted to GameTime in May 1999 and after a number of tantalising delays, finally arrived in Barbados on 13th August 1999. Further delays prevented us taking possession until 10th September 1999 however it was a relief to receive the equipment and move into the installation stage.

Generous donations by a surface carrier out of Miami contributed to this equipment reaching Barbados when it did and at minimal cost. We are eternally grateful to this company since the reality of having to meet freight costs which almost exceeded the cost of the equipment itself, seemed certain to scuttle the project.

In the planning stages, it was felt that we would have been able to complete the installation ourselves. However once the specifications were received, it became clear that installation would have been much more technical than at first thought and it was decided to use the services of a certified installer out of Puerto Rico. Alberto Munoz arrived on Friday September 17th to commence installation, which was completed by Sunday 19th September with the help of a number of dedicated Kiwanians.

Needless to say, some anxious moments crept in at the installation stage but thanks to the commitment of the Kiwanians and public-spirited members of the community, we were able to meet our schedule for completion.

The scope of the project was influenced by the architectural plans for the play park area. The Project Committee decided to install equipment that would best utilise the space, be affordable and most of all appealing to the many children visiting the site.

The project was of significance as it was in sync with the Kiwanis motto "Serving the Children of the World". Because of its location, high visibility and intended use, it has assisted in widely promoting the work of Kiwanis to locals as well as the many visitors who transit the area. It is the club's flagship project, is also highly marketable and has been featured on the front page of the club's year 2000 Business Calendar

This is the first major undertaking by this club in terms of scope, planning, implementation, cost and mobilisation of members.

The entire project has been completed at a cost of US\$14,300.00 and has a market value of US\$23,000.00. The 598 man hours expended by club members have not been costed.



There is indirect benefit to the entire 250K population of Barbados but direct benefit will devolve to all children in Barbados and those visiting the island. It is attractive in design, colour and safe, having been installed according to manufacturer's specifications by a certified installer.

The Hastings Rocks is one of the few remaining "windows to the sea" in Barbados. Apart from ambience, the refurbished recreation area has been regaining its appeal and popularity as the #1 fair ground and open air concert area. Our significant contribution was acknowledged at the official opening ceremony on a marble plaque erected by the Committee responsible for the park's refurbishment. The official opening ceremony was attended by a large number of Kiwanians and Distinguished Lieutenant Governor 1998-1999 Lennox Prescod.

Our own plaque proclaiming that this project is a "Gift to the Children of Barbados from the Kiwanis Club of Barbados South" has been mounted on the play park.

A programme of periodic monthly maintenance by our club has been put in place in order to maintain the integrity of the project.



Just recently, Lieutenant Governor 1999-2000 Claude Davids paid an official visit to the park to see the proud work done by the Kiwanis Club of Barbados South.

Through our involvement with this project our club's profile with the corporate community as a group of persons committed to the welfare of children and capable of completing useful projects has grown.