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Volunteers support Multnomah's Spring Garden Park and its natural play area

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Over 120 residents, children, and dogs attended last month's National Night Out held at Spring Garden Park (3332 SW Spring Garden St).

In fact, there were so many people they ran out of pie and ice cream! To the east, a majestic Mt. Hood was bathed in alpenglow; so close, you could almost touch it.

Acquired by Portland Parks and Recreation in 1999, Spring Garden Park claims four and a half acres and is unlike any other park in town.

There are no slides, swings, monkey bars, or even a restroom. It is considered a natural play area encouraging children to use their imagination in play.

Instead, there are logs, stripped of their bark for balancing on; stumps for standing and playing king of the hill; large boulders to climb on; and sand, lots of sand.

In fact, as several community Portland Police officers arrived, one child was witnessed pouring a large cup of sand on his playmate's head. The officers decided to eat some apple pie instead.

Welcome to a new (old) way of playing. It is part of a growing movement to help children get away from screens and to experience play the way their parents and grandparents once spent their youth.

Many of the *Post* readers can conjure up their days of creating forts and tree houses and mud pies. Everything goes here. Well not everything.

Smoking is not allowed within 25 feet of the play areas. Dogs are not really welcome, but if they are present, they are required to be leashed at all times. And, even though the park sign says for children aged 2-12, it is available for 2-102.

Multnomah resident Lori Howell, a mother of two, is the tireless leader of Friends of Spring Garden Park. In 2008, Lori formed the Friends group, recruited a board and parents to volunteer. They applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Multnomah Village Umpqua Bank.

Portland Parks & Recreation's first nature play area was completed in November 2011 as a result of collaboration between PP&R, Friends of Spring Garden Park, and Umpqua Bank's Multnomah Village branch.



City Commissioner and Multnomah resident, Steve Novick, enjoys a relaxing evening at National Night Out at Spring Garden Park. Next to Novick, Lori Howell with Amelia (10) and Benjamin (5), enjoy ice cream and pie while Katy Brumbelow, Multnomah NA vice-chair, tends to Novick's dog.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

TriMet donated a tree from their property on Lincoln Street to supply wood and materials to the project. The tree had to be removed during construction of TriMet's Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail project.

"Money is needed to keep the park sustainable," pleaded Lori, who explained she was suffering from 'volunteer fatigue'. "We are

in need of new volunteers to help write grants and to provide parental supervision."

Parental supervision and participation is needed at Playdate in the Park on Saturday, September 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

And since city commissioners Amanda Fritz and Steve Novick
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Starbucks celebrates 20 years in Multnomah Village



Doug Van Ness, district manager; Moses Ross, chair of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association; Randy Bonella, executive director of the Multnomah Village Blocs Initiative; and Jennifer Gibson, store manager, helped show off new amenities of the remodeled Starbucks coffee house at the Grand Re-opening on August 24. New features include a chill case, snack insert, and brewed reserve coffee machine with vacuum and French press technology. Additional business news on Page 4.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Metro considers Barbur Boulevard demonstration project for federal funding

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Metro recently held a public hearing on the proposed highway improvements on Oregon 99W (Barbur Boulevard) from Southwest 19th to 26th avenues. Some 40 people attended and 23 testified.

The City of Portland is considering nine different projects for submittal for Regional Flexible Funds

totaling \$94 million from three federal programs which are allocated every two to three years.

The public was invited to submit written comments and over fifty emails and letters were received. (The majority of the correspondence supported the Portland Central City Multimodal Project, specifically the completion of the Willamette Greenway Trail.)

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