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# The Optimist

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# Let's Play Together

project proposed by Optimist Club



*OmniSpin Spinner*

By Nadege Fortier

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation is proud to be part of several projects that make a real difference in the lives of youth all across Canada. The Optimist Club of Mitchell, Ontario, earned a Spread Relief grant to help them promote and fundraise for their "Let's Play Together" project. Their goal is to provide accessible and inclusive outdoor playgrounds and splash pad for all children.

*The following article was featured in the Mitchell Advocate on March 6, 2019 and was written by Andy Bader. The original text can be found online at <https://www.mitchelladvocate.com>.*

West Perth municipal council wholeheartedly endorsed a proposal from the Optimist Club of Mitchell to create what they're calling "accessible, inclusive, multi-generational playground experiences" in Mitchell.

Structured in three phases, Optimist Co-President Sharon Flanagan and Optimist Past President Dianne Josling appeared before council last month to outline their "Let's Play Together" proposal.

In 2015, the club started the West Perth Opti-Challenge baseball program where youngsters from Perth and Huron with various health challenges come to Mitchell's Keterson Park Sunday evenings to do what all children want to do – play.

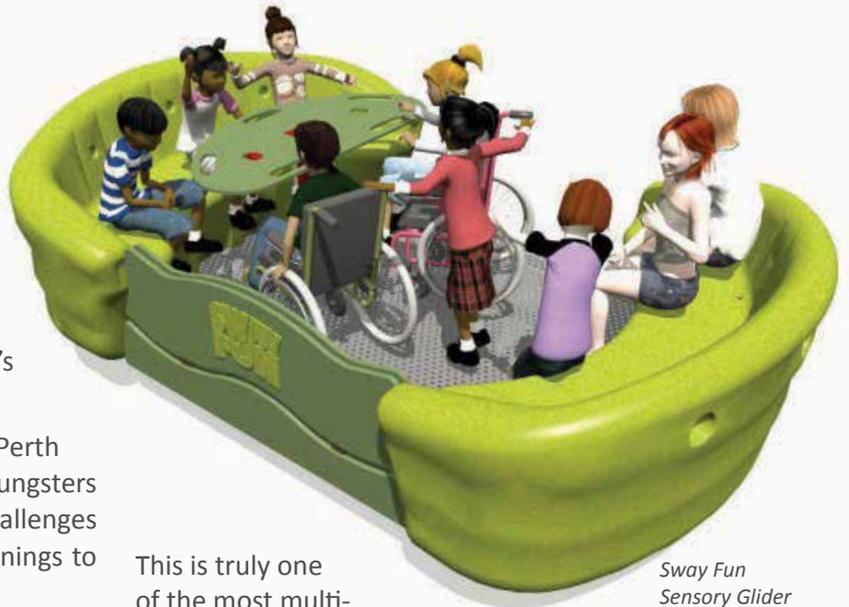
The new multi-phase play equipment project in their vision is the installation of a "lemon drop" feature at the West Perth splash pad, acquire a stainless steel submersible aquatic wheelchair, and exchange one swing with a bucket seat, for those with disabilities, "who can swing, side by side, with all the other children," Flanagan said. The hope is to install the swing across from the Lions playground equipment at the base of Lions Park. The first phase, which is scheduled to be completed this year, will cost \$10,000, fully funded by the Optimist Club.



*Bucket Seat*

The next two phases are still being investigated, but with council's endorsement, could be eligible for grant requests, Flanagan told council.

Phase two is a Sway Fun Sensory Glider, which also will hopefully be installed close to the Lions playground as well, plus benches and picnic tables. The glider is a play table with cup holders and wheelchair handholds, and will have enough room for two wheelchairs, or scooters, play wagons or walkers, plus large benches for eight to ten other riders of all ages."



*Sway Fun Sensory Glider*

This is truly one of the most multi-generational pieces

of equipment that I've ever seen," Flanagan said, saying she and Josling have seen ones in operation in Ingersoll and Woodstock. "They are truly amazing."

The third phase is also subject to fundraising and grant availability, but it's an OmniSpin Spinner, a high-backed piece of equipment that offers children of all abilities valuable inner ear sensory stimulation and encourages interactive play for all ages. The spinner can accommodate eight-to-10 riders with many others around the outside as the "drivers." There are speed controls to control how fast it operates, and is very accessible.

It is projected that this piece of equipment, if it proceeds, would also hopefully be built on the river side of the road over a 50-foot x 25-foot area across from the Lions playground as well, complementing both.

Preliminary planning in consultation with West Perth staff and the Lions Club has been completed."

Our hope is that successful completion of our accessible, inclusive multi-generational project will provide Mitchell with free family fun and continue to showcase our community as a destination where kids of all abilities can play side by side and reach their potential," Flanagan said.



Canadian Children's  
Optimist Foundation