



Ellie Rose Kienast, 2, adds her seal of approval. Photo: Krisa Bruemmer, KP News

New Playground at Volunteer Park

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

There is a new playground at Volunteer Park and the kids love it.

The new play structure has multiple slides, monkey bars, a climbing bridge, a tunnel with peek-a-boo holes, ladders, lots of places to climb and more. In addition to the main play structure, kids can climb up the sides of the axis spinner or sit inside where it spins around.

"It's good," said Colton Kienast, 4, playing there with his younger sister and preschool friends on a sunny Friday afternoon. Pointing at a swirling green plastic megaphone that looks like something out of a Dr. Seuss book, Colton added, "I can talk to sea monsters through there."

"It's fun," said Finley Cassidy, 4, making a monster face before sprinting a lap around the woodchip-filled play area and making his way up the main play structure.

"I love it!" said Hattie Wyrick, 5. "I liked jumping up to the monkey bars." Hattie's 2-year-old brother Graeme said he likes the new playground but had the most fun on the swings on the opposite side of the park.

"We sought and got input from the public," Key Pen Parks Commissioner Mark Michel said. "Most of the labor was in-house, which saved us a ton of money."

"The cost of the equipment, site preparation, retaining wall and engineered wood fiber was \$76,000," Key Pen Parks Executive Director Scott Gallacher said. "We had parks staff install the equipment as the vendor could not meet our timeline for installation, which is not included in that figure."

Key Pen Parks reused the green and yellow Spring Fling and purchased the Spinner Axis and main play structure from

commercial playground equipment manufacturer GameTime.

In addition to the new playground, 20-acre Volunteer Park offers softball fields, a skate park, half-court basketball, a swing set, horseshoe pits, a 9-hole disc golf course, a quarter-mile ADA paved walking trail, forested trails, and an outdoor concert area where Cinema Under the Stars movies will be shown on Fridays in August. The park also has picnic areas, including a picnic shelter that is available to rent. Food is available for purchase at The Snack Shack concessions stand. The Key Pen Parks office is also located at Volunteer Park.

"The new playground is one I would have enjoyed when I was a kid," said Veronica Grandt, who coordinates events for Key Pen Parks and runs their Popsicles in the Park program. "We have had more kids playing on the playground here at Volunteer Park since its completion."

"It is nice to hear children and parents enjoying the new equipment," Gallacher said. "We have had a desire to replace the older equipment for a number of years, but it really gained traction in late 2017 after Gateway Park opened up."

Vanessa Lentricia, who has a 3-year-old daughter, said she appreciates having a playground with a place to purchase snacks or lunch nearby. "It's great they've got the picnic benches and they're shaded," she said. "It's not crowded and there are all the trees. We love it!"

"I liked running around being a sea monster at that park," Colton told his mom, CrystalAnn Kienast, at the end of their day. "And the Snack Shack is right there to get yummy ice cream."

Volunteer Park is located at 5514 Key Peninsula Highway NW in Lakebay.