

Dave Stark

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REALTORS® Make a Special Child's Dream Come True

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Pleasanton, California (December 20, 2018) – REALTORS® from San Leandro, Castro Valley and Hayward are making a very special girl's dream come true.

Mia Vasquez's dream is to create a playground for children of all abilities and their families. Complicating this dream is the fact that Mia, who is now 10 years old, was born with Cerebral Palsy. Undaunted, her parents and the Hayward Area Recreation District (HARD) are using creativity, a park that needs sprucing-up and community support to make this dream possible. REALTORS® have joined the cause by raising more than \$7,500 towards a December 31 goal of \$10,000 for the project.

Mia's Dream Come True Playground will be a one-acre portion of Tennyson Park and the first phase of a larger revitalization of the entire facility located at the corner of Tennyson and Huntwood in Hayward. All of the playground amenities will be fully accessible to children and adults with a variety of special needs.

Daniel Vasquez, Mia's father, kick-started the project with a vision and by securing seed funding. "Mia's father sketched out a Hayward-centric park on a napkin," said Pamela Russo, Executive Director of the HARD Foundation. "They came to HARD with the sketch and a \$5,000 check from the Make-A-Wish Foundation in 2016."

Russo and HARD staff took the sketch and ran with it. The final concept for the park is a microcosm of the Hayward environment, culture and history. "Visitors enter on a representation of the San Mateo Bridge, from there they will experience the SF Bay, acknowledge the Hayward Fire Department, the water tower, the cannery, the airport and the sulfur creek nature center, the Russell City blues are in the middle," Russo explained.

Bill Espinola, Hayward-based REALTOR® and member of the Bay East Association of REALTORS® Board of Directors, brought support for the playground to the REALTOR® community. “It’s a great cause,” Espinola said, “and it’s something that is going to help kids that are underserved. I’d like to see additional fundraising within the REALTOR® community and corporate sponsors and Affiliate members.”

Espinola encouraged the Central County Marketing Group (CCMG), a weekly meeting for real estate professionals working in the San Leandro, Castro Valley and Hayward communities, to raise funds for the project. Within a few weeks, REALTORS® had donated thousands of dollars. The CCMG Holiday Party at the Redwood Canyon Golf Course on December 12, was dedicated to raising money for Mia’s Dream Come True Playground. Mia’s mother, Emelyn Lacayo and Russo made a special presentation, recognizing REALTOR® support and asking everyone to help.

“It just shows incredible community outreach,” Russo said. “REALTORS® heard our presentation and immediately became engaged and wanted to help. I think, in large part, it’s because our park is so tangible and REALTORS® know the areas represented in the park. It’s such a personal story about our community. They see this as one more opportunity to better the community and better the lives of children with special needs.”

Russo was impressed by the interest and enthusiasm from the REALTOR® community to support the park. “With the results you can see the REALTOR® community is a-giving community and wants to be part of the communities we serve.”

“One Board meeting about three years ago Mia, her family and a representative from Make-A-Wish came to the Board and explained they had to go to Palo Alto to use an accessible playground,” said Paul Hodges, a member of the HARD Board of Directors and a REALTOR® from Hayward. Hodges acknowledged Russo’s larger vision for the project, “This thing has kind of grown leaps and bounds from what I imagined. It will be a destination park and not just a neighborhood park.”

“REALTORS® know what quality of life is all about, and how certain projects can benefit a neighborhood,” Hodges said. “Mia’s Dream is a game-changer. It’s more than just a value-add for the neighbors. Mia and her family really tug at our hearts and REALTORS® are a giving bunch.”

Photos from REALTOR fundraising events for Mia’s Dream Come True Playground are available on request.

About the Bay East Association of REALTORS®

The Bay East Association of REALTORS® is a professional trade association serving more than 5,800 residential and commercial real estate professionals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area by providing programs and services to

enhance their ability to conduct business with integrity and competence. Bay East offers access to the Multiple Listing Service, professional development training, advocacy to protect private property rights and promote home ownership and a variety of networking opportunities and events.

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