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Hayward Area Recreation and Park District FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hayward Area Recreation and Park District *Transforming a Community-One Dream at a Time*

Hayward, CA (October 2018)– Alameda County and the City of Hayward are embarking on a major revitalization of the Tennyson Corridor in South Hayward. The goal is to improve the quality of life for residents and address health and safety issues in the area.

Included in the first phase of the Tennyson Corridor Strategy will be the groundbreaking of Mia's Dream Come True All-Inclusive Playground, a project of the Hayward Area Recreation & Park District (HARD). The \$3.5M playground kick-off will be on October 30th and is expected to be transformative for Hayward with its many innovative play structures designed for children with disabilities.

"Mia's Dream Come True Playground is at the center of the Tennyson Corridor and is a catalyst project for South Hayward", shares Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle. It reflects positively for South County to have needed resources infused to this area", says Valle. Hayward is the 3rd most diverse city in the United States, with South Hayward identified as one of Alameda County's more disadvantaged communities.

Mia Vasquez, age 10, has multiple disabilities and wasn't expected to live beyond her first birthday. It was Mia's father, Daniel, who sketched a "Hayward-Centric" park on a napkin because of Mia's love of the outdoors. Mia's mom, Emelyn explains, "We wanted Mia to be able to play, explore and just be a kid in her wheelchair with all her friends and family, regardless of her special needs." Little did the Vasquez family know their vision would turn into a \$3.5M destination for the Hayward area.

The Vasquez family approached HARD in 2016 with their playground sketch and a \$5000 gift from Make-A-Wish Greater Bay Area. "Hearing the Vasquez family's story and the importance of inclusion for our residents, the HARD Board of Directors unanimously approved Mia's Dream Playground", reports HARD Board president Carol Pereira. The Board asked the HARD Foundation to take lead in raising the additional funds needed to complete the project.

With tremendous contributions from Alameda County, Kaiser Permanente, Eden Health District, Hayward Rotary Club and other major funders, HARD will be building one of the most unique and specialized access parks in California. Various structures in the park will be fabricated by the same company who has done projects for The Walt Disney Company, Merlin Entertainments and Universal Studios.

"The City of Hayward has rallied around Mia and her family and we are pleased to be a part of their dream for Mia and our community," shares Hayward Mayor Barbara Halliday. The City of Hayward through CDBG funding, also granted \$96,000 to the HARD project.

Both Hayward Fire and Police Departments are also stepping up to partner with HARD of this project. Hayward Fire Department has donated a fire truck to the playground that will be transformed into a fire



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house where children in wheelchairs can wheel in the structure and simulate driving the big truck. Hayward Police Chief Mark Koller feels the build of Mia’s Dream Come True will bring a strong sense of community to the Tennyson Corridor. “When a community feels pride about where they live, work and play, it evokes an inherent protection of their neighborhood,” Koller shares.

The next phase of the project will be to re-develop the Eden Youth Center which is adjacent to Mia’s Dream Come True Playground. The center hosts a pediatric clinic, childcare center, and is a vital community resource in Hayward.

Media Availability:

- The Vasquez Family*
- Fire Chief Garrett Contreras, City of Hayward*
- Supervisor Richard Valle, Alameda County*
- Police Chief Mark Koller, City of Hayward*
- Mayor Barbara Halliday, City of Hayward*
- Michelle Gaskill-Hames, SVP and Area Manager, Kaiser Permanente, Southern Alameda County*
- General Manager Paul McCreary, HARD*
- Executive Director, Pamela Russo, HARD Foundation 510.760.4289*



Mia’s Dream Kick-Off Celebration

October 30, 2018
1:30PM – 3:30PM/Program at 2:30PM
Tennyson Park
28377 Huntwood Ave
Hayward, CA 94545

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Parks Make Life Better!

Mia's Dream Come True Playground

Coming 2019

