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Elks help wheelchair children get into the swing of things

By **Kevin Penton** Staff Writer June 26, 2008

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MIDDLETOWN — Children who use wheelchairs now can enjoy swaying on a swing during a lazy afternoon.

Middletown Elks Post 2179 organized an effort to bring a specialized swing that can accommodate a wheelchair to the Croydon Hall playground in the Leonardo section.

"We just want the kids to be kids," said Mike

Dickie, who coordinates the Elks' special children committee.

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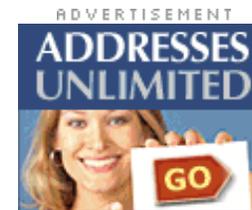
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The swing's \$5,000 cost was split among the Elks; Pat Dunphy, a local physical therapist who came up with the idea; and Port Monmouth's Whirl Construction, which provided and installed it, Dickie said.

Children will not need to rely on someone to push them — they can mimic the momentum-creating effect of kicking one's feet by pushing and pulling a chain that is part of the swing, said Elks member Bob Santoro.

"We thought it would be a great thing for the kids," Santoro said.

Deputy Mayor Pamela Brightbill, Mayor Gerard Scharfenberger and Committeeman Patrick Short were on hand last month to cheer on the children who first rode the swing.

"The Elks do some amazing work in Middletown," Brightbill said. "It was a great collaboration between various community groups."

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