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## Middletown school opens \$50,000 playground that is result of fundraising

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Port Monmouth Elementary School opened its new playground Monday to pupils, a project that was more than five years in the making and funded entirely by parents and community members.

Marie Boccasino, chairwoman of the playground committee of the school's PTA, said the approximately \$50,000 playground came from parent and community fundraising.

Middletown Elks Lodge 2179 also made a sizable donation, particularly through a May 2008 fundraiser with retired New Jersey Devils hockey player Ken Daneyko that raised approximately \$8,000 for the playground.

As a result of the contributions of different groups, Boccasino said the project is not being looked at as a PTA or school accomplishment, but rather a community accomplishment.

To represent that, Boccasino said, ribbons were placed all over the new playground equipment for the classes to cut.

"This is what community is all about," Principal Dean W. Bisgrove said during the ceremony. "It's a great lesson (for the students). Things don't happen overnight (and) require other people to make it happen."

Boccasino, who chaired the playground committee with her husband, Dennis, said that the project began years ago when a group of PTA moms with "a dream and no money" started discussing what they could do to raise funds.

As a result, the school's gift auction was started, the success of which provided the bulk of the funds needed for the project, she said.

The playground was constructed by Whirl Construction of Port Monmouth and the Board of Education facilities crew. Additional funds for the project came from a Major League Baseball fundraiser benefiting the playground and the efforts of local Girl Scouts, Boccasino said.

Boccasino said that overall, approximately \$55,000 has been raised to put toward the new playground, but the remaining funds will be used in the spring for "finishing touches" such as benches and picnic tables.

**ON THE WEB:** Visit [www.app.com](http://www.app.com) and search "playground" for a photo gallery from the opening.