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Two Days and \$20,000 Left to Raise for Playground Grant Match

Traverse City, Michigan – Despite Wednesday’s deadline to raise \$20,000 more in on-line pledges from the community in order to receive a \$50,000 MEDC grant for a new playground at the Civic Center, Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Director Kristine Erickson remains optimistic.

“On Friday, we needed \$44,000 to close the donations gap, and look what’s happened,” said Erickson. “Since Friday, we received over \$24,000 in pledges, and we could have received even more!” Erickson explained that for a donation to count toward the match, it may be no more than \$10,000.

According to the Parks Director, the gap came even closer to closing this past weekend when a community member offered to donate a large amount to the project. “The donor was disappointed to learn that only \$10,000 of that amount would count toward the match,” Erickson said. “It’s okay, though. We are grateful to have the grant match opportunity.”

At the end of July, Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation and Patronicity, an arm of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), launched a municipal crowdfunding website for the “Get Out and Play” playground project. Erickson said the Parks Department decided to take advantage of the crowdfunding opportunity offered by the MEDC and MSHDA because of the \$50,000 grant match.

Donations were slow coming in for the first few weeks. “Summer is a tough time of year to quickly raise substantial funds because of vacations, and many organizations have already earmarked their gift budgets by then,” said Erickson. “Our community is very giving and supportive of recreation and wellness opportunities, though, and there’s momentum, now.” If, Erickson pointed out, between now and Wednesday, two local businesses, organizations, or individual community members each donate \$10,000, or if 100 donations of \$200 each are made, the \$20,000 short-term goal will be met.

Earlier this year, community members voted for one of three play structure designs, following a community playground survey. Total cost for the new structure is \$150,000, and one-third of that amount was raised in previous years from two donations and grants awarded for community participation in two Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan wellness challenges. Those funds, said Erickson, are earmarked for the playground project. “Now we are just waiting for the community fill in that \$20,000 gap by Wednesday at midnight so that we can receive the MEDC match.”

For more information about the Get Out and Play Civic Center playground project, to view the design, and to donate, visit www.grandtraverse.org, or <http://www.patronicity.com/getoutandplayproject>

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