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MAYOR EMANUEL AND MEMBERS OF THE BEVERLY COMMUNITY VISIT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF FUTURE *CHICAGO PLAYS!* PLAYGROUND AT RIDGE PARK

Playground is one of the Initial Aging Playgrounds that will be Completely Rehabilitated as part of the Chicago Plays! Playground Renovation Program

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael P. Kelly, Alderman Matthew O'Shea (19th Ward) and members of the Beverly community today visited the construction site of a new playground at Ridge Park, located at 9625 S. Longwood.

The Ridge Park playground is one of the first 50 of 300 aging playgrounds that will be completely rehabilitated as part of the *Chicago Plays!* playground renovation program. Last March, Mayor Emanuel announced that over the next five years, the Chicago Park District will rebuild, repair and/or refurbish 300 playgrounds in communities across Chicago.

"Community investments in our parks are essential because they promote active, healthy lives for residents," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Over the next five years we are completely rebuilding 300 playgrounds in Chicago. When we are finished, every child, regardless of where they live in the city, will be within a ten minute walk of a world-class park or playground."

In order to prioritize equipment replacement, the Chicago Park District worked with the Friends of the Park organization to seek community input and determine those playgrounds in greatest need of repair.

"Ridge Park is one of the most active and utilized playgrounds in our community," said Alderman Matthew O'Shea. "The new equipment will be a welcome addition to this wonderful facility. The entire Beverly-Morgan Park community is grateful to Mayor Emanuel and Park District CEO Kelly for this great neighborhood improvement."

“Many wonderful childhood experiences involve outdoor play and often those memories are cultivated in a neighborhood playground,” said Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael P. Kelly. “We hope the children of this community will enjoy this playground for years to come.”

The *Chicago Plays!* program invests approximately \$100,000 in new playground equipment at each park location for a total program cost of \$30,000,000, allowing the Chicago Park District to provide a broader investment in capital projects throughout the City. The first 50 playgrounds to be upgraded including Ridge Park playground, announced by the Mayor last July, are scheduled for completion by fall 2013.

The ground breaking of the *Chicago Plays!* program highlights the major announcements the Mayor has previously made regarding parks, including a comprehensive plan to build and improve parks throughout the city, so that every Chicagoan is within a ten minute walk of a park.

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Photo Caption: Mayor Rahm Emanuel greets youth athletes at Ridge Park to highlight what will be a completely rehabilitated playground as part of the *Chicago Plays!* Playground Renovation Program.

Photo Credit: Brooke Collins // City of Chicago