

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](mailto:Gage.Harter@vac.org).

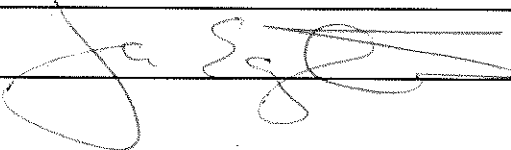
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Culpeper County
Program Title: The Bright Spot Inclusive Playground
Program Category: Parks and Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: John Egertson
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award Application

The Bright Spot Inclusive Playground, Culpeper County



Problem Statement

One of the goals of the adopted 2015 Culpeper Comprehensive Plan was to “Expand recreational opportunities and facilities for citizens of all ages, including those that fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines. The plan further states the following objectives in order to meet that goal: “Make reasonable efforts to provide persons with disabilities accessibility to parks, open space and facilities for leisure opportunities” and “Foster partnerships with internal County Departments, social and civic organizations, and other local, county and state governments in providing recreational opportunities.”

Culpeper County believes that all children should be encouraged to play together in a playground. Many existing features of our current parks and playgrounds were not handicap accessible and this created a separation between users. Culpeper County determined it was necessary to increase the interaction between non-handicapped children and handicapped children in order to aid in creating friendships and understandings between all children.

In the summer of 2017, the Bright family approached Culpeper County with a \$4,500 donation to purchase a wheelchair accessible swing. Their daughter, Leeann, uses a wheelchair and had been given money for this purpose as birthday gifts. Culpeper County staff determined that there were no existing parks where an accessible swing could be installed due to the terrain and other site limitations. It was at that point a new playground was conceptualized, one that would be fully inclusive and accessible to all.

The community quickly embraced the idea of an inclusive playground and a committee was formed to fundraise and oversee the design. More than \$343,000 was raised in less than 6 months and the park was conceptualized, constructed and opened in just 1 year. More than fifty organizations, individuals and foundations made contributions to the project. While staff pursued grant opportunities, the majority of the individual donations were solicited by word of mouth in the community.

Full list of contributions can be found here:

<https://web.culpepercounty.gov/Government/CountyDepartments/DepartmentsP-V/ParksandRecreation/ParksandFacilities/CulpeperSportsComplex/TheBrightSpotInlusivePlayground>

As constructed, the playground features new accessible parking with zero entry curb into the playground, paved sidewalks, suspended smooth surfacing, a wheelchair accessible swing, ramped play structures, out of chair accessible swings, and many additional features. The committee proposed naming the playground “The Bright Spot” after Leeann Bright and her family.

“It is a dream come true,” Sandy Bright said. “A lot of kids will be able to enjoy it and the schools will be able to bring their special needs children out. It’s not just for people with special needs, it’s for people with all abilities.”

https://www.starexponent.com/news/a-space-for-all-county-celebrates-bright-spot-playground/article_02b3e829-fb14-596f-97fe-6eda0d18938d.html

https://www.insidenova.com/culpeper/news/bright-spot-inclusive-playground-to-offer-fun-for-all/article_ad288ff6-822d-11e8-954c-1763a53ab7b2.html

Excerpt from the groundbreaking article

https://www.starexponent.com/news/culpeper-parks-and-rec-to-build-inclusive-playground/article_dbdc61a0-c113-5079-a3f1-0a18c703509e.html

Franco Calabrese, who co-chairs the playground committee with Sandy Bright and is also an adaptive physical education teacher for Culpeper County Public Schools, said having such a facility in Culpeper County will allow kids with special needs to be able to play with their friends and families right here in Culpeper.

“The closest accessible facility is 40 to 45 minutes away in Fauquier County,” Calabrese Culpeper Parks and Rec to build inclusive playground said. “Having this right here in our own backyard is so important.”

Whether an individual has a wheelchair, walker, oxygen tank or a feeding tube, they will be able play with their siblings here at The Bright Spot, Calabrese said.

Deanne Rennon said her daughter Erica is excited to get a chance to play with her friends on the playground. Erica is diagnosed with 4-H syndrome, which is a leukodystrophy — meaning

her brain consists mostly of gray matter which affects development. The rising sixth grader at Floyd T. Binns is most looking forward to the ADA swing at the park.

“To have it right here and have it local is just amazing,” Deanne said.

Liam Cornwall, a Culpeper resident who has been in a wheelchair for the past 13 years, said he believes such a facility would have been a great benefit to him when he was growing up.

“I think it’s immensely important. If I’d had one of these when I was a kid, it would have been wonderful,” Cornwall said. “All I could do with my friends when I was a kid was to sit and play video games.”



Executive Summary

The Bright Spot Inclusive Playground was conceptualized in late 2017 when the Bright family raised \$4,500 to purchase a wheelchair accessible swing for their daughter, Leeann. The Bright family initially requested it be installed at a Culpeper County Park. Staff determined that no existing location would allow wheelchair access to the swing. The concept for a new inclusive playground was born and in less than one year more than fifty organizations, individuals and foundations raised over \$343,000 for the playground that was completed in the summer of 2018. The community named the playground “The Bright Spot” after Leeann Bright.

The Bright Spot Inclusive Playground, complete in 2018, represents a communitywide effort to provide a playground where everyone can play together regardless of their physical limitations.

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Brief Overview

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