

City Council

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City of Sebastopol**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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High Res Image: <http://bit.ly/3rlFHZC>

SEBASTOPOL CELEBRATES THE OFFICIAL RE-OPENING OF THE LIBBY PLAYGROUND WITH “SLOW CAT’S TREASURE HUNT” FOR KIDS**SEBASTOPOL, CA, March 11, 2021—**

After a planning and construction process of more than a decade, the City of Sebastopol officially marked the re-opening of the Willard Libby Playground, located on Pleasant Hill Road and Valentine Avenue with a small, socially-distanced ceremony on March 4, 2021.



Re-Opening Ceremony Attendees From left, Michael McGlothlin of Rotary Club of Sebastopol Sunrise, Planning Director Kari Svanstrom, City Manager Larry McLaughlin, Mayor Una Glass, Vice Mayor Sarah Glade Gurney, Dan Rasmus of Rotary Club of Sebastopol

The original and beloved “Super Playground” was built on the site in April 1992 with all volunteer labor. After 15 years, it was dismantled in 2007 because of changing building codes as well as maintenance and safety issues. Phased replacement of the playground began in 2014 with the section of the playground used by younger children. Planning Director Kari Svanstrom headed up a public survey in fall 2019 to help select new play structures for 5 -12 year-olds, which received over 500 responses. With the assistance and generosity of the Sebastopol Sunrise and Noon Rotary Clubs, and State

of California Prop 68 funding, the final phase was completed in May 2020. The official re-opening was delayed while the playground was closed for use off-and-on due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Early on in the project Rotary Club leaders approached Public Works Superintendent Dante DelPrete with the desire to do something to benefit the children of Sebastopol. DelPrete knew that the playground replacement project was short on funds and put together a presentation for the clubs which garnered enthusiastic support from the members.

“We’re especially grateful to the Sebastopol Rotary Clubs. I like to say that this is the playground that tamales built as the two clubs made and sold over 8,500 tamales to raise money for the project,” said Mayor Una Glass. “This is a great place to unplug and get away from screens for a while. Bring your kids over for some fresh air and exercise and to just enjoy being outside.”



In honor of the March 5 “National Day of Unplugging,” the City is also announcing the launch of “Slow Cat’s Treasure Hunt,” for children. “Slow Cat,” a large, friendly sculpture by artists Patrick Amiot and Brigitte Laurent, is the unofficial safety ambassador for Sebastopol. Through April 29, children are invited to look for stickers of Slow Cat that are placed around the park and playgrounds. Participants will mark the locations on a map that they can pick up at the

Little Free Library located at the playground or in the breezeway of City Hall. The map is also available for download from the City of Sebastopol website. Each participant who returns their map and completed entry form to City Hall will receive their own Slow Cat sticker. A drawing of entries will be held to select one winner from each of three age groups: 5 and under, 6 to 9, and 10 and above, who will each receive a Slow Cat trophy created and donated by the Amiot and Laurent. Entries must be received by April 30, 2021. Winners will be announced on May 5, 2021.

See the City website for more information. www.CityOfSebastopol.org/SlowCatTreasure

For a 2014 video on the playground's history see

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gK0iRe1j8f8>