

Boys and girls club moves closer to own playground

By MICHELE McLEAN
Mirror Staff

It's been 18 months of hard work, and now it's almost time for play.

A groundbreaking ceremony for a new playground was held Tuesday at the East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club, 100 Galloway Rd.

"The children in the club were saying wouldn't it be nice if we could have a playground," said Ron Rock, the club's executive director. "There is no playground in this park at all. In fact there aren't any playgrounds on the green space in this community.

There was a great need and it was identified by the kids."

Rock said the agency needed \$30,000 for the playground.

The children who use the club raised \$5,000 by hosting fundraisers including car washes and bake sales. The club also

sold a children's cookbook for \$5 with proceeds going to the playground fund.

"We got the children here at the club to develop their own favourite recipes," he said. "We had it published."

By raising money themselves, Rock said the children may see it as their playground and take better care of it. "It's not just a playground for the co-op. It's going to be a community playground. The children are giving this playground to the

community."

It's their way of giving back, Rock said.

The rest of the money was raised by the generosity of community organizations.

"The Kiwanis Club of Scarborough heard about this initiative and they decided they wanted to be a partner in it."

They donated \$15,000. The United Way donated \$10,000.

The City of Toronto has agreed to maintain the playground, Rock said. "In most communities, some-

one comes in and throws the playground in," he said. "The kids said 'We would like a playground in our park' and they went out and raised five grand to put it there. And then the corporate and social sector came in. I think that's absolutely fantastic."

The East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club serves about 350 children between the ages of two and 10.

The agency provides accessible early childhood development and educational programming through subsidized childcare, family resource centres, special needs consultation, drop-in programs and life skill and crisis intervention for children and youth.

Their main building is on Galloway Road, but they also operate out of Corvette Public School, Cornell Public School, Morningside

"We are very excited about this. The children are very excited about this."

— Ron Rock



Mirror photo/DAN PEARCE

Ward 43 Councillor David Soknacki (Scarborough East), left, Kiwanis Club of Scarborough's Stuart McCormack, Eric Belbin from Best Buy, United Way's Darlene Norris, Sharon Waddingham of the city's parks and recreation department, Ron Rock, executive director of East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club and Kathy Grexton of the club break ground for the new playground in Galloway Park on Tuesday.

Mall and a resource centre on Mornelle Court.

"The community has told us that we are providing a impeccable service to them and we are getting really great accolades from the community," he said. "We are really needed

in this community. We offer a safe place for children and youth to socialize."

The excavation for the playground starts Monday and installation of the equipment is slated for the following week. Rock said the

children should be playing on it by mid-July. "This is top-of-the-line playground equipment from one of the country's best producers of playground equipment. We are very excited about this. The children are very excited about this."