

THE PROJECT

In the fall of 2008, the West Jordan Rotary Club began focusing on building a Miracle League ballpark. The Miracle League, a nonprofit organization, designs and constructs custom baseball fields that invite children of all abilities to play baseball. Enthused about building the first Miracle League field in Utah, Jeff Burley, adaptive recreation manager for the Salt Lake City Parks and Recreation department, worked closely with West Jordan Rotary and the City of West Jordan to find a site for the ballpark, complete its funding and oversee its installation and programming. It was not until the installation of the park had begun that Burley stumbled upon another idea that would take the facility to another level.



THE PROCESS

“I made a call to Johnny Franklin, the Miracle League’s development director, to discuss details about the ball field,” explained Burley. “He mentioned the partnership between Landscape Structures and Miracle League to build inclusive playgrounds adjacent to their adaptive ball fields. From that day on, the playground took on a life of its own.”

Landscape Structures believes that playgrounds should be designed to include specific sensory experiences that will appeal to all children—typically developing, those with autism or other sensory processing disorders, and those using mobility devices—and in the process give those children with sensory disorders a place to play with their peers.

As the construction of the ballpark unfolded throughout the summer of 2009, Burley’s vision for a truly inclusive playground also began to take shape. It would possess Landscape Structures’ three hallmarks of *A Higher Level of Inclusive Play™*—accessibility, developmentally appropriate and sensory. The entire collection of play events would maximize the visual, auditory, tactile, vestibular and proprioceptive stimuli that are most attractive to children.



To get the support of the community, Burley showed them specifically what inclusive play really looked like. Along with his local Landscape Structures playground consultant, Sonntag Recreation, Burley presented color renderings of the playground and described each piece of equipment and its role in inclusive play.

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To begin, the playground would be constructed over a poured-in-place rubberized safety surfacing that would allow anyone using a mobility device to easily access the playground and be in the middle of play. Once there, they would find plenty of fun.

A PlayBooster® playsystem would be included and feature extra-wide ramps and decks to allow wheelchairs or other mobility devices to pass. Linked from the PlayBooster with an overhead ladder is an Evos® O-Zone™ climber for more climbing challenges. A SwayFun® glider would also be included to bring children of all abilities together. Plus, CoolToppers® shade structures hover overhead to help shield children from the sun.

This playground would cater to children of all ages and abilities with the most innovative sensory play events ever seen on a playground. Three types of spinning events, four types of swings, a Sensory Play Center™ containing six visual, auditory and tactile activities, a Roller Table™ for muscle stimulation, and a secluded Cozy Dome™ that would be both a refuge and a climber provide a variety of sensory experiences. Landscape Structures also designed a signature piece—a brilliant Multi-Sensory Discovery Wall featuring a mosaic of colorful tiles, glass beads and stones. Constructed of Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC), this sculptural element would be the visual anchor for the playground and draw both children and adults to explore its textures and sounds.

THE RESULT

Six weeks after presenting the inclusive play concept to the community, the playground was installed adjacent to the Miracle League baseball field. “We had a weekend of Miracle League baseball games in mid-October and dozens of families from all over the Salt Lake City area participated,” says Burley. “When they saw the playground they were blown away. It was huge for them. Several came up to me with tears in their eyes and said ‘who do we thank for this?’ I said, ‘Thank the City of West Jordan, they made it happen.’”

Many of the families that attended that day thought that the playground would only be open during ball games, or that it was a pay-to-play type of playground. When Burley told them that they were free to use it whenever they wanted, they were amazed. “These families just could not believe that someone had taken the time to truly understand their lives and their needs,” says Burley.

To learn more about Landscape Structures and their affiliation with Miracle League, visit playlsi.com or call 888.438.6574.

