



Monday, September 9, 2002

OU athletes help build playground

By **Mary E. Iorio**, OU Writer

For nearly eight hours Sept. 8 in 90 degree temperatures, some 110 Oakland University athletes cleared ground, poured concrete, lifted poles, installed slides and let their fingers remember the youthful allure of the monkey bars as they helped build two playgrounds at Oakland Township's Delta Kelly Elementary School.

"They needed some big, strong guys to put that equipment together, so we brought over some 7-footers," said OU Men's Basketball Coach Greg Kampe. "As a community service project, this fit us perfectly.

Kampe's two children attend Delta Kelly. When he heard the school needed as many volunteers as possible for intensive playground construction, he recruited other OU coaches and athletes to help.

In all, six Oakland University teams — men's and women's basketball, men's and women's swimming and diving, baseball and softball — put on a full court press to transform two empty lots into state-of-the-art playgrounds complete with climbers, slides, tunnels, wobbly bridges and firehouse-style slide poles.

"I helped mix cement all day long," said outfielder Jeff Hall of OU's baseball team. "We mixed it, then wheeled it over to dump into the holes that held the support poles. We put up railings and screwed the slides in place. There were all kinds of slides. That playground is gorgeous. We didn't have anything like that when I was a kid."

OU students worked side by side with Delta Kelly parents and teachers.

"It was incredible to see so many people out there helping to build the play systems," said education major and junior basketball player Sarah Yaksich. "I'm going to be a teacher someday, so it felt great to help a school."

Fellow teammate Nicole Randolph cleared ground and picked up trash across school property. "I think everybody always loved the playground. I was the one on the monkey bars, climbing all over everything."

Pitcher Tim Stenger, a red-shirted freshman who stands some 6 ½ feet tall, helped raise the structure's green roofs. "It was a great experience. We got to work together as a team, and we got to know new players."

The elementary school students got to try their new playground equipment for the first time on Monday, Sept. 9.

"I think there were probably a lot of really happy little kids at school on Monday," Kampe said.

SUMMARY

For nearly eight hours Sept. 8 in 90 degree temperatures, some 110 Oakland University athletes helped build two playgrounds at Oakland Township's Delta Kelly Elementary School. Basketball coach Greg Kampe's children attend Delta Kelly. When he heard the school needed volunteers for intensive playground construction, he recruited other OU coaches and athletes to help.

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