



Volunteers at work



Photos by Lee Borrowman

## Moraga Tots Get Big Toys

By Lee Borrowman

Its most satisfied customers may not even have been born when discussions first began around a possible upgrade to the Tot Lot at the Moraga Commons last fall. But this past weekend, volunteers assembled the new play ground equipment which will be available to happy toddlers just in time for the opening of this summer's Concerts in the Park season on Thursday.

The cool new structures were purchased from Big Toys, a purveyor of environmentally-friendly play ground equipment. According to Parks and Recreation Director Penelope Leach, the structures are "made of 100% recycled materials, most of which is recycled milk cartons," are maintenance free and come with a 50 year warranty.

Like many things that happen in our small community, this project was the result of the collective volunteer efforts of many supporters. The equipment was purchased using funds from the Robert-Z' Berg grant, a per capita grant that can only be spent on recreation or recreational equipment. To qualify for this funding, the Town had to present its proposal for state review and approval. There is a matching funds requirement attached to these grant monies, so the town had to go scouting for an additional \$21,000 to help fund the project.

**"Oh, who will help me?" cried Miss Penelope!**

**Enter the calvary!**

The Parks and Rec Foundation was able to donate \$17,000 towards the match because a generous donation was made to the Foundation for this very purpose by the Mark Robeson family. The Moraga Women's Society donated another \$4000, and the match was made. The excavation that occurred in the days leading up to last weekend was done free of charge, by Moraga's own Bay Area Drainage.

But who was going to build this new fantasy land? Up to the plate stepped the Kiwanis Club. About twenty Kiwanis volunteers, and a handful of younger dads, toiled away on a glorious Saturday under the direction of a project manager supplied by the vendor. Dale Walwark, who coordinated the Kiwanis effort, said, "This town does not have the money or the staff to make things like this happen. We've always depended heavily on volunteer labor and donations." Looking around at row after row of plastic bags full of hundreds of different small parts that somehow all managed to look alike, Walwark joked, "It's every father's Christmas nightmare!"

There will be an official ribbon-cutting ceremony before the evening concert on June 21, but the new and improved Tot Lot will be open for business in the meantime.



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