



SCHOOLS MAKE MADISON
LEGACY

Elementary School Playground Fund

The story of an enduring gift made through
Madison Public Schools Foundation.

As a volunteer reading to kids at Gompers, Joel Skornicka began “sidewalk supervising” the renovation of its playground.

When the contractor backed out two days before the new equipment was to be installed, Joel used his community connections to find a contractor willing to jump in and work with the school to install the equipment alongside school volunteers.

It was after his involvement with the Gompers playground community build that Joel approached the Foundation for Madison’s Public Schools with the idea of an Elementary School Playground Fund. The Foundation provides fiscally sound professional management of the fund, including the necessary transfer of money to the MMSD to pay contractors. For potential donors, the fund offers a tax-deductible giving opportunity.

Chris Elholm, current Mendota Elementary School PTO President and former co-chair of the playground campaign, said “I knew my mission was to fulfill the Principal’s dream of a new playground that was updated and developmentally appropriate. Although most donations came from elsewhere, the support provided by the Foundation proved very helpful to our fundraising efforts. The Foundation made suggestions, gave advice, and arranged with Mr. Skornicka for us to use the administrative advantages of the brand new Elementary School Playground Fund.”

Many more school playgrounds require funding and support for similar improvements. So Joel took it a step further by leaving a gift in his will to the Playground Fund to provide for its continuation in the future.



JOEL SKORNIKA

Photo Credit: Greg Anderson

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All of our schools deserve great playgrounds. The playground projects represent the importance of public-private partnerships. For example, a PTO chooses to partner with the Foundation to raise private monies to renovate a playground. That evidence of private support leads to a commitment of public funds from MMSD. This model gives current families, students, and staff input into the design of a playground that will meet their needs.

Joel does not call himself a philanthropist. But we think he is. He believes the future depends on how well we educate our children. His commitment to education started with his school teacher parents, continued with his children in the MMSD public schools, and will live on through his legacy gift. With Joel's vision and planned giving, the Playground Fund will continue to serve the Madison school district long into the future.



Mendota Elementary School Playground



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To create your own legacy for Madison public schools, contact Melinda Heinritz, President, Madison Public Schools Foundation at mheinritz@SchoolsMakeMadison.org or 608.210.6902.