

## North Oaks Community Foundation

### Raising Funds for "A Playground for Everyone" at Turtle Lake Elementary School

Today almost 20% of the kids at Turtle Lake Elementary School live in North Oaks. Many of them are second generation Mounds View school district students. For many years, North Oaks has attracted families to the community because of the Mounds View school district and its great reputation.

Turtle Lake Elementary School is trying to set another standard of excellence with its "A Playground for Everyone" project. This playground will provide a barrier-free play experience for all families and will be the first of its kind in the northern metroplex. The playground project embodies the importance of inclusion and diversity and enhances the quality of life for an entire community. It is another way to extend the school's standard of excellence within the walls of the classroom to the outdoors. Darin Johnson, the principal of Turtle Lake, says "this project represents a goal that I have for all of my students...the goal to maximize every learning opportunity that comes their way. This playground offers more than just a place to play, it offers all students a place to grow into the type of citizen we would be proud to call a neighbor, a colleague, or a friend."

The Playground Committee has raised over \$115,000 to date. The total cost of the project is \$280,000 and the goal is to complete the project by the summer of 2014. Stephanie Zumbolo, a North Oaks resident with three children at Turtle Lake says "We believe this project will be the first of its kind in the North Metro and most importantly will enhance the quality of life for the kids at Turtle Lake and the families in this region. It's simply the right thing to do."

The North Oaks Community Foundation's goal is to help fund projects that have a lasting impact on the community. Based on this goal, the Foundation has awarded the playground project an innovation grant because of its commitment to improving the quality of life of its students and families. The Foundation has also received a matching gift challenge from a resident of \$1,000. So far, \$500 of it has been matched. Gifts of any size may be sent to the NOCF at 100 Village Center Drive, Suite 240, North Oaks, MN 55127. Checks should be made out to the North Oaks Community Foundation and may be designated for the Turtle Lake Playground project. Gifts are tax deductible.