

The IOWA LION



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Club Completes \$20,000 Musical Playground as Legacy Project

*By Roger Allen
Montezuma Lions Club*

The Montezuma Lions Club is celebrating the completion of its major project of adding a nine-unit layout of percussion musical instruments to the Montezuma school playground. The project involved considerable research, planning, coordination with the school and fundraising. Installation was completed Tuesday, Oct. 2 and the early response by children and adults has been enthusiastic.

*"Music gives a soul to the universe,
wings to the mind, flight to the
imagination and life to everything."
— Plato*

The instruments include three pairs of conga drums, a babel drum, an eight-pipe chime set, a seven-piece set of tubular bells and two xylophone-type instruments – one called a Duo Cupla and the other a Cavatina. Paired with the color-coded Cavatina is a color-coded Music Book featuring well-known songs such as "Old MacDonald Had A Farm," "Twinkle, Twinkle," "Itsy Bitsy Spider," "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Beginning nearly two years ago, in recognition of Lions Clubs International's centennial, local Lions clubs were challenged by the international organization to sponsor a significant project in each of their communities that would be of a lasting nature



JOY IN A WHEELCHAIR. Young Hunter, confined to a wheel chair, experiences joy playing with the xylophone at the musical playground.

and add to each club's legacy. The Montezuma club, also celebrating its 70th anniversary, appointed a committee to research ideas and present proposals to the club.

Volunteering for the committee last year were then club President Joe Barrow, Larry Huff, Boyd Sparks, Roger Allen and current club President Rick Talbert. The committee met several times over several months and seriously explored several projects, one by one ruled out due to "roadblocks" or being done by another entity, or more doable at a later time.

Having recently experienced outdoor music

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instruments in another community, Roger Allen presented that idea to the committee. After further study, the committee presented the proposal to the full club, which decided to pledge the club's reserve fund of \$5,000, provided additional funds could be obtained through grants and other sources.

The committee was advised by consultants to "dream big" and as funds were raised the goal grew to an eventual \$19,000 raised from the club, grants and generous individual donations. For finishing touches, the school added \$1,300 that brought the instrument purchase cost to \$20,300. Giving the funds a big boost was a grant of \$6,000 from Poweshiek County Alliance, plus a \$1,000 Grinnell College Mini-Grant. One generous community individual matched the Lions club's \$5,000 and another added \$2,000.

"Providing much-appreciated assistance in writing grant requests were County Extension Director Kathy Lents and her staff," noted Roger Allen, the Lions' percussion project chairman.

The Lions club was particularly supportive of the project because it was in support of fine arts, providing an opportunity for children to have fun creating and appreciating music at a young age, something that will last them a lifetime. In the playground musical environment it is said, "there are no wrong notes." Another plus is that all of the instruments are wheelchair-accessible. This factor has already been bringing joy to a wheelchair-bound Montezuma student.

One of the persons consulted about what instruments to include is Carrie Burnett, Montezuma school instrumental music instructor, who has been



LIONS LEGACY. Lion Roger Allen hangs a sign recognizing donors who helped purchase the musical instruments at a playground in Montezuma, a Centennial Legacy Project of the Montezuma Lions Club.

enthusiastic about the project from the start. She commented, "I'm excited to have this musical addition for our students and children in the community. Exploring the different sounds that you can make and playing the songs from the included songbook



DRUM CORPS. Children play with the drums on the new musical playground in Montezuma.

is fun for all ages. I am so thankful for the musical playground."

Kurt Hanna, Montezuma Elementary School principal, said, "The musical playground has been a wonderful addition. Students now have the cultural exposure that gets them excited about the fine arts."

It quickly became evident that the instruments can be enjoyed at a very early age. Zuma Zoo Daycare is located across the street from the musical instruments, and the daycare children were among the first to get to try them out. Alexa Wheaton, Zuma Zoo owner and director, said, "The new musical instruments have added great educational value to the playground. It has been so fun to watch our kids interact with one another while playing. We especially love the xylophone that has the songs with the color coded notes to play."

The Lions have worked closely with School Superintendent Dave Hoeger, who said, "On behalf of Montezuma Schools, we would like to sincerely thank the Montezuma Lions Club for their generous donation of the outdoor musical equipment to our school. It was very evident that the students love the new instruments as they were playing them while our maintenance staff was still securing the final bolts." He added, "These instruments will provide our students a wonderful opportunity each day while at recess to work with their friends to create a wonderful new tune. This equipment will serve our school and entire community for years to come."

The instruments were made by "Percussion Play," based in Great Britain. They were purchased through distributor ABCreative.

See more photos on Page 26.