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Playground honoring Marcus in works

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ANDERSON TWP. - Efforts to raise money for an Anderson Township playground that will memorialize Marcus Fiesel have been so successful that construction to finish the playground will begin this spring.

Nearly \$400,000 has been raised to build the playground in Beech Acres Park on Beechmont Avenue. It will accommodate children with physical and

mental disabilities.

Part of the playground will be dedicated to Marcus, the 3-year-old developmentally delayed boy whose foster mother, Liz Carroll, was convicted last week of murdering him. The murder trial of his foster father, David Carroll Jr., is scheduled for March 19 in Clermont County Common Pleas Court.

"Not in our wildest dreams did we think we'd get the money we needed this quickly," said Duffy Beischel, an Anderson Park District commissioner.

About \$70,000 was raised in a campaign initiated by Clear Channel Cincinnati and WLWT television for a memorial for Marcus in Anderson, Beischel said.

Hundreds of people last August searched for Marcus in Juilfs Park, another Anderson Township park, after Liz Carroll falsely claimed he was lost in the park. That led Clear Channel Cincinnati and WLWT to kick off a fund drive for a Marcus memorial.

Much of the money donated for the playground was not necessarily connected to Marcus, Beischel said. Some donations were made before Marcus' death and some were given to help special-needs children in general, he said.

The park district has not solicited donations for the playground in Marcus' name, because park officials don't want to exploit the tragedy.

The only recreation equipment in the playground now is a set of swings. The playground will include a canyon climb, a train station and train, a riverboat shelter, a treehouse and a playhouse.

"It will be awesome," said Molly McClure, park district executive director.

The park district needs \$180,000 more to finish the playground. McClure said the district has applied for grants to help close the gap. Donations of in-kind services are being accepted.

The park district is consulting with a child psychologist and others about what might be an appropriate memorial for Marcus.

"We want to make sure that the memorial's message has a positive spin so that children will feel safe and secure and not fearful," McClure said.