

GREENFIELD

New playground equipment installed at middle school, Four Corners

By **SHELBY ASHLINE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — The small groups of children receiving some in-person education at Greenfield Middle School and the Discovery School at Four Corners were in for a treat earlier this month, when the installation of new playground equipment was finished.

“They were very excited when they were on their outdoor break and we said they could go ahead and use it,” said Christy Moore, director of the Greenfield Recreation Department, which funded the new playground structures through capital budget requests for fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021.

According to Moore, the majority of Greenfield schools have rebuilt their playgrounds since she has been with the Recreation Department, so the new structures at the middle school and Four Corners rounded out a chain of playground improvements. Moore, who gets recertified every three years as a playground safety inspector, ensures that the city’s structures meet safety standards.

“The reason why we had replaced them is because the equipment there was outdated. Specifically at the middle school, it failed the safety inspections,” Moore said, noting that the Greenfield Middle School’s old playground had exposed pieces of steel and chain that didn’t meet safety standards.

At Four Corners, she said, some structures had been added more recently, but the central playground structure needed to be replaced. Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA)-compliant equipment was also installed. However, problems with hardware resulted in a delay setting up two ADA-compliant swings.

The Greenfield Middle School playground improvements cost about \$30,000, and those at Four Corners cost about \$82,000, with both figures including installation costs, Moore said. A certified playground installer conducted the work, though the Department of Public Works helped with spreading wood chips to minimize costs.

The life expectancy of the commercial-grade playgrounds is at least 20 years.

“This is a very challenging time for the community and certainly for the youths,” Moore said of the playgrounds’ significance. “People are happy to have something new and exciting that they can play on when they come back to school.”

Although the playgrounds are for school use only during school hours, the public can use them outside of school hours and on weekends. Moore said it’s necessary for parents to be mindful of how many children are on the playground at once, given health safety precautions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is advised to stay 6 feet apart and wear masks.

“If there’s a large group there, we don’t need to add more to it,” she said.

While there are hand sanitizer stations on the playgrounds, Moore said they have been removed for winter.

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STAFF PHOTOS/PAUL FRANZ

Children use the playground at the Discovery School at Four Corners in Greenfield last week. Below right, Crystal Kimball supervises Owen Greeley on the playground.

