



SPORTS FOR ALL CAMPAIGN SERVING GREATER HOUSTON

Case for Support

EVERY STUDENT DESERVES TO BE INCLUDED IN ANY CLASSROOM AND AROUND THE CAMPUS

OVERVIEW

Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of school life. Inclusive education therefore requires developing and designing schools, classrooms, programs, and activities so that all students, including those with disabilities, learn and participate together.

More than **124,000**
special needs children
attend Greater Houston
area public schools.

Greater Houston has been growing and changing rapidly in recent years. Recent Census data indicates that there are approximately 1.2 million students in the Greater Houston area, and as many as 10% of them are coping with a disability¹. In Humble ISD alone, there are approximately 40,000 elementary through high school students, 8% of whom have a disability. As the region continues to grow, so too does the demand for special youth and family programs.

Responding to a significant community need, the Humble Independent School District is making a transformational investment in a Pre-K through middle school inclusive campus and has engaged interested stakeholders to make a joint investment. Humble Independent School District Foundation and the YMCA of Greater Houston are collaborating by building two specially designed sports fields, an adaptive playground, and a pavilion on the site in Northeast Houston.

This new school will be a model campus for educational attainment for ALL students. The recreational complex will be accessible to the entire Greater Houston community and is estimated to cost \$4.8 million. The YMCA of Greater Houston and the Humble Independent School District Foundation are launching a \$3.3 million capital campaign titled **Sports For All** to raise the private funds necessary to build the sports complex and bring this model campus to its comprehensive conclusion. Our collective goal is to complete the project by late summer 2017. We are now seeking generous support from individuals, corporations, and foundations that embrace the idea of creating a place where anyone and everyone can play outdoors and experience the joy of being part of a team.

¹ US Census Bureau 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), reported by Greater Houston Partnership Research Department in October 2014.

ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The Humble Independent School District Foundation supports the Humble Independent School District (Humble ISD), located in northeast Harris County. The district educates nearly 40,000 students. Humble is one of the 25 fastest growing districts in Texas and is expected to educate over 51,000 students by 2023. Humble ISD boasts outstanding honors in athletics, scholastic endeavors, and the arts. The district has a highly diverse student body: 43% of the students are Anglo, 32% are Hispanic, 18% are African American and 3% are Asian or other race/ethnicities. Approximately one-third of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

Humble ISD is building its newest elementary and middle schools on a master site in the newly developed Groves neighborhood. This campus is being designed from inception for inclusive education for Pre-K through middle school students. It will service a greater number of students with disabilities and special needs than standard schools are equipped to serve starting in its Pre-K classrooms. The new schools will include life-skills and applied skills classes. Both schools will be specially designed to go beyond the requisite ADA standards and will include such things as lower cabinets, lunchroom tables and seats, and other indoor and outdoor infrastructure designed for students of all ability levels.

The YMCA of Greater Houston serves the entire region offering a variety of programs and initiatives in three major focus areas:

- **Youth Development:** Values and skills learned early are vital building blocks for life. Because of the Y, more young people are taking a greater interest in learning and making smarter life choices. Children and teens are realizing their potential by learning values and positive behaviors and developing their talents and interests. That makes for confident kids today and contributing, engaged adults tomorrow.
- **Healthy Living:** Being healthy means more than simply being physically active; it also means maintaining a balanced spirit, mind, and body. The Y helps people move toward that balance by learning new skills or hobbies, fostering connections with friends through our lifelong learning programs, or bringing loved ones closer together.
- **Social Responsibility:** The Y is committed to strengthening communities by providing opportunities for kids, adults, and families to work together as well as by providing support to our neighbors.

The YMCA of Greater Houston currently has one adaptive sports complex in the region located at its Langham Creek location in West Houston. It desires to expand its current Miracle League baseball leagues and add other team sports for children with special needs. The YMCA's Lake Houston location will partner with Humble ISD on this unique project that leverages its efforts in northeast Houston through site integration.

THE NEED: A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN PLAY

Why make room for children with developmental disabilities? Because all children deserve to feel like they belong somewhere. Team sports and other outdoor activities are uniquely capable of offering this to kids who have more challenges than solutions, more questions than answers, and more places that they don't belong than those where they do.

Over time, the Greater Houston YMCA and Humble ISD have expanded their programs to include children with a variety of special needs. But as the population in the area has continued to increase, the number of the children – and thus the need for barrier-free facilities that provide a safe place for them to learn and play – has also multiplied.

Humble ISD will use the recreational facilities, including extensive playground equipment, during the school day. It will grow its Integrated Athletics and Adaptive P.E. programs, which at this time can only serve approximately 200 middle and high school students. The new facility will also allow the district to hold tournaments, after-school practices, and summer camp activities for students with special needs.



Currently, an area high school allows the Lake Houston Family YMCA to use

its softball field to operate its Miracle League baseball program, but there are significant challenges with this arrangement. As one example, sporting events designed for children and youth with disabilities often have to be cancelled after it rains because they cannot run or maneuver wheelchairs and other adaptive devices safely when the ground is soft. Most important, there are no nearby venue alternatives properly sized and equipped to meet the recreational needs of children and adults with disabilities. The time has come for the community to invest in recreational facilities that will be accessible to all children and youth, including those with special needs.

THE SOLUTION: A NEW ADAPTIVE SPORTS COMPLEX

Inspired by the extraordinary success of adaptive sports and Miracle League projects in other communities across the United States and around the world, and recognizing the urgent need in the local community for adaptive recreational space, the partners are collaborating to build a new adaptive sports complex. Specific components of the ADA compliant, handicap accessible project include the following:

- **Two Miracle League baseball/multipurpose fields** that will be specially equipped and custom designed according to Miracle League standards. They will feature a cushioned synthetic turf that will allow players with disabilities (including those who use wheelchairs and walkers) to hit, run, catch and play ball without fear of injury. The fields will be used for baseball, softball, and soccer.
- **A barrier-free playground** providing a variety of multisensory experiences, including climbing (proprioceptive system), movement (vestibular system), and tactile, visual, and auditory exploration. The playground will include ramps, special swings, sensory related items, low activities, and other features that can be modified to enable children with special needs to play side by side with their siblings and friends.
- **A covered pavilion** equipped with modified basketball hoops, activity space, restrooms and a concessions area. The pavilion also includes small rooms for quiet spaces often required when overstimulation occurs with special needs persons.

THE ADAPTIVE SPORTS COMPLEX PROGRAMMING

Children with special needs have historically been excluded from participating in sports due to the lack of appropriate facilities. Our project was inspired by a national baseball league for special needs children called The Miracle League. This program is unique in that it pairs able-bodied children and adults together with a player with special needs through a “buddy” system. The benefits to both groups are immeasurable. There are only two Miracle Leagues in Greater Houston, and the Lake Houston Family YMCA runs one of them. With the Miracle League standards in mind, our Adaptive Sports Complex is specifically designed to enable individuals with special needs to participate in team sports including soccer, football, kickball, and field day games in addition to baseball. Students will participate either through the district’s integrated athletics or through a community partner’s program.

The elementary and middle school students will utilize the facilities during the school day and the Y and other community partners will operate team sports programs in the evening and on weekends.

The sports complex will also be open for a variety of organizations. The facility is designed to accommodate everything from field days for area public and private schools to Special Olympics. Any partner organization wishing to use the facility will be welcome. The partner organizations are working on a detailed operational plan to ensure that this new community asset will be used to the fullest year-round.

The partner organizations will evaluate their programs to demonstrate their impact and gather input for continuous improvement. Adaptive sports participation statistics will be tracked to monitor and ensure that the new facilities are used to the maximum. The Greater Houston YMCA will also survey parents of the children who participate in the Miracle League programs as well as the volunteer “buddies” who assist them. The district will gather qualitative and quantitative results of its integrated athletics and adaptive physical education curriculum. The data will be used to further improve program quality and ensure a high-quality experience for the participants, families, and volunteers.

LEADERSHIP

Campaign Cabinet:

Joe Cleary (Campaign Chairman, Harvey Builders), Mark Koenig (Campaign Co-Chairman, Community Volunteer), David Brady (EVP, Houston Zoo), Carrie and Jonathan Brinsden (Community Leader, CEO Midway), Kim Brusatori (Founder/CEO Village Learning & Achievement Center), Twila Carter (Executive Director, Community Relations, Astros Foundation, Houston Astros), Star and Mark Heinrich (Community Volunteers, Keller Williams, Retired), Dave Martin (Houston City Councilman, District E), Jay Mincks (EVP, Insperity), and Heath Rushing (CEO, Memorial Hermann Northeast Hospital).

Consultants:

Joiner Architects, Inc. and Sterling Associates

PLEASE JOIN US

We are seeking generous support for the **Sports For All** Campaign to create an exciting new place in the Lake Houston community where people of all ages and abilities can play, exercise, and have fun. This will not only give joy to the participating individuals but also strengthen the community as a whole. Thank you in advance, for your commitment to this vital project!

"Our dream is to have a totally inclusive model where kids with differences are not separate from their peers. Rather than having a temporary visa to the world of the able-bodied, they are citizens of the same world. The goal for any child is to be a lifelong participant in the activities that interest them. The adaptive sports complex and programs like The Miracle League give kids with special needs the opportunity to be participants, not just spectators."

Ellen Shimer, Coordinator Early Childhood Education for Humble ISD and parent of a special needs adult

Site map for the new Adaptive Sports and Recreational Complex in The Groves Community in Humble

