

YONKERS RISING

Dreamers & Builders Create a New Playground at School 9

Friday, June 20, 2014

By Dan Murphy



More than 200 volunteers from Morgan Stanley, Yonkers Public Schools, Rotary Club of Yonkers-East Yonkers, YCAP, organizers from KaBOOM!, Yonkers Firefighters and ROTC members, and residents of the Yonkers community joined forces last week to build a new playground at School 9.

The design of the playground was based on children's drawings created at a special design event in April, and after months of planning and preparation, volunteers were able to assemble, carry and install the playground pieces and more than 50,000 square feet of surface by hand, to have the playground ready for its opening day.

Mayor Mike Spano and YPS Superintendent Dr. Michael Yazurlo thanked everyone for the hard work and commitment to the children of Yonkers, and cut the ribbon on the new playground. The playground is the seventh built by Morgan Stanley and KaBOOM!, the national nonprofit dedicated to the bold new goal of ensuring that all children, particularly the 16 million American children living in poverty, get the balance of active play they need to become healthy and successful adults.

For nearly 120 years, School 9 has educated Yonkers children, serving many of the same families for generations in a school facility that has received few upgrades over the years. The new playground with up-to-date equipment and a safe play surface will inspire the much-needed building modernizations at

School 9, as well as provide a recreation space for the school's nearly 400 pre-kindergarten through grade six students, their families and the surrounding community.

“At Morgan Stanley, it is our privilege to give back,” said Joan Steinberg, global head of philanthropy for Morgan Stanley. “In particular, we want to give children the healthy start they need and give them every possible opportunity for lifelong achievement. To that end, we partnered with the Yonkers community to give 450 kids their dream playground... a place where they can imagine and grow - physically, socially and mentally.”



Mayor Mike Spano celebrates with School 9 students, volunteers and officials to cut the ribbon for new playground.



From left, Councilman Christopher Johnson, Mayor Mike Spano, YFT President Pat Puleo and YPS Superintendent Dr. Michael Yazurlo with happy School 9 students.



Morgan Stanley, in partnership with KaBOOM!, led a project to build a playground from scratch in a single day. Pictured above, L to R, at the start of the playground build on June 12, 2014, are: Alec Stackhouse, Associate Project Manager, KaBOOM!; Rev. Dr. Loren Russell; Tracie Creighton-Thiam, Interim Principal, Yonkers Public School 9; Pat Puleo, President, Yonkers Federation of Teachers; Paul Diamond, Executive Vice President, Yonkers Federation of Teachers; Joan Steinberg, Global Head of Philanthropy, Morgan Stanley.