



200th RED HORSE 2016 IRT PLAY PLACE PORT CLINTON, OHIO

In June 2016, the 200th RED HORSE Squadron (RHS) Squadron, Ohio Air National Guard, completed an Innovative Readiness Training mission in Port Clinton, Ohio. In a joint effort with community organizations, the 200 RHS constructed an all-inclusive playground that is accessible to those of all disability levels. The newly completed 11,000 square foot Flagship Collaborative Play Place is the largest community built structure ever allowed by the manufacturer in the United States. While construction is nothing new; constructing a playground is a task that was unique to the men and women of the 200 RHS.



The huge driving force behind this project was the community. Port Clinton's residents raised over \$650,000 to purchase the Play Place, with over 60 percent custom items made specifically for the project. Knowing that the 200 RHS is locally stationed, the community purchasing committee contacted the unit to determine if the 200 RHS could assist. The 200 RHS enthusiastically agreed to help (and fortunately received formal approval from the Pentagon a few months later). And, because the community was able to rely on the 200 RHS to install the components, the cost savings allowed the community to add additional items to the project design.

In place of traveling for annual training, members of the 200 RHS were allowed to assist with the Play Place build in Port Clinton just a few miles down the road from their base. Several specific career fields were sought out for the project, such as structures, engineering, equipment operators, and



several logistical career fields. With every project comes the opportunity to train individuals to develop and enhance their skills and abilities. That was no different with this project. Heavy equipment operators were given the opportunity to work with adjusting existing grade to the new proposed grade while working in a smaller than usual worksite. They also gained familiarization on a broader range of heavy equipment than typical jobs, given the unique structure and required spacing. Structures airmen



received valuable training in reading plans, tool recognition, and properly aligning structures. Engineering Assistant airmen were able to train on various surveying and construction functions such as: site layout, grade staking, plans comprehension, and quality control.

Supporting only as construction supplement for project, the 200th RHS quickly noticed that several items had been overlooked in the planning and design phase. The first issue occurred on day one when the engineering team noticed that the entire site was one foot lower than the anticipated elevation. This resulted in 1600 cubic yards of fill material being hauled into the area to raise the elevation to the proper grade for drainage purposes. This delayed the start of the project by three days. The next issue was the lack of details in the plans, which were missing critical information and assembly instructions. Finally, there was a learning curve to understand what parts were needed and where to find them in the 32 pallets of equipment. Once the parts were organized in a manner that made finding pieces quicker and easier, the project started to move along in an expedient and efficient manner.



One aspect of the project that never became an issue was the amazing integration with the community. Volunteers from the community came back day after day to work alongside the members of the 200 RHS towards the common goal of completing the playground in a quality manner, while ensuring safe work practices were adhered to.

Members of the 200 RHS quickly made new friends within the community, and the military-civilian team were successful in the timely completion of the Play Place. While experienced representatives from the manufacturer stated that the build would take approximately 30 days to complete; the joint community effort completed the project -up to the rubber matting install- in just 10 days. This allowed for the rubber matting to be placed prior to the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

The Flagship Collaborative Play Place opened to the public on July 1, 2016; and since the opening of the playground there have been many compliments on the speedy completion, and gratitude to the 200 RHS for assisting in making a local dream playground become a reality.



(The 200th RED HORSE Squadron, Ohio Air National Guard, is based out of Camp Perry and Mansfield Ohio, story by MSgt Thomas Barron and MSgt Daryl Walters)