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Nestle gives \$350K for new Park playground

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Courier-Life

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One year after the State Parks Department revealed they would close East River State Park during the winter months, state officials announced that a new playground will be constructed along the East River in a public-private partnership with Nestlé USA.

Nestlé Juicy Juice, a division of the Swiss-based food giant **Nestle** USA, is donating \$350,000 to build playground structures for children in parks throughout the state, including one on the seven-acre state park along the East River (North 8th Street and Kent Avenue).

State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash characterized the public-private partnership as a welcome gift which will help add more facilities to heavily used park space in New York City.

“Our community parks and green spaces are more important than ever during a tough economy and we’re seeing a rise in visitation numbers at all of our state parks,” said Ash. “The Nestlé Juicy Juice commitment represents new experiences and fun for an estimated four million New York families during the next year that would otherwise have not been possible in the current economic climate.”

Nestlé Juicy Juice Marketing Manager Victoria Nuevo-Celeste was thrilled to help bring a playground to an area of Williamsburg with many young families looking to utilize the park throughout the year.

“At Juicy Juice, we strive to help parents raise healthy, happy children. Partnering with the New York State Parks is the perfect way to provide families across the state with safe and enjoyable play environments,” said Nuevo-Celeste.

The half-acre all-ages playground will be constructed on a plot of land to the right of the North 8th Street entrance close to the water, well away from the concrete slabs where the JellyNYC Pool Parties held their summer concert series.

Rachel Gordon, regional director of New York State Parks and Recreation, explained that the playground will consist of a wooden train that children can climb and crawl through and will be completed by early December, opening in the spring.

“It is a very natural playground,” said Gordon. “Children learn best and play best, when connected with nature.”

Gordon added that unlike last year, Parks is looking to keep East River State Park open throughout the winter.

“We’re keeping all our options open. We have a significant fiscal crisis. At this point, there have been no decisions,” said Gordon.