



By Diane Carbray,
Executive Director/CFO

This is an exciting example of the community collaborating with municipal Parks to create and sustain a green space in an impoverished neighborhood with high crime. It took lots of collaboration and an “abundant community” attitude to visualize what could happen, and the persistence and cooperation with each other to MAKE it happen! This is how it was created:

Funding for the Parks Department for the City of Fresno was desperate and the City was going to close 11 Parks. While the City was exploring options to keep the public parks operating, one of the sites, the El Dorado Park, was targeted for closing in December, 2010. The City asked the non-profit and business community to consider taking over the parks, and particularly the programming that occurred in the buildings that was used as a learning and management center in the middle of each park.

In the case of the El Dorado Park, the City owned the 600 sq. ft building on the park and the Wesley United Methodist Church owned the property. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County was asked by the Church to see if they would consider operating the building because they did not want to close down this only green space for the kids in this neighborhood. We said yes but we need help funding staff. It is a great site, next to public housing and in the midst of gang activity neighborhood and where children need a safe place to play and receive mentoring and homework help. One of the Church members, Lori Clanton, also was with the Fresno Regional Foundation, and knew a benefactor and philanthropist that was very interested in helping impoverished children and educational needs. The City of Fresno was also anxious to participate as they could no longer staff it, but wanted the building to still be open and the site to still serve a Park for the neighborhood.

The Boys & Girls Club signed an agreement in December, 2010 with the City of Fresno to operate the facility for 3 years. Volunteers helped to repaint the inside of the Club, donated carpet, repainted the outside bathrooms and repaired the water fountain. The grand opening was on January 27th of 2011.

Then in October, 2011, Pacific Gas & Electric provided the funding to build a Play Space with KaBoom! to put in the park setting and create a space for play. The kids and families of the Boys & Girls Club and the church came together to design the play equipment, choose the colors, and inform KaBoom! of what they wanted in the park. Volunteers came together from all partners and on Dec. 17, 2011, and in one day, built the play space in El Dorado Park!

The El Dorado Boys & Girls Club had over 225 members as of end of 2013. Partnerships that created the re-opening of El Dorado Park included:

1. Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County
2. Wesley United Methodist Church
3. Fresno Regional Foundation
4. Peter Bennett Foundation
5. City of Fresno Parks & Recreation Department
6. Pacific Gas & Electric - Sponsorship and Volunteers
7. KaBoom! Playground Equipment

Attached are two pictures; please call me at 559-266-3117 if you have any questions. Thank you!!

Boys and Girls Club of Fresno County at El Dorado Park, Fresno, Ca



El Dorado Park Play Space – Partnerships

