

Sherry Mercer

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 2:48 PM
To: Premier of NL; Davis, Bernard; Sheilagh O'Leary
Cc: Mayor; daker@mountpearl.ca; mayor@paradise.ca; O'Driscoll, Loyola
Subject: Idea Proposal for Accessible Recreation

To whom it may concern,

I am contacting you with an idea to benefit adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It would promote physical fitness, encourage socialization, and cultivate community. I propose the construction of an adult-sized playground specifically for older children and adults with disabilities.

This summer I visited several playgrounds with my son. He is 15 years old and on the autism spectrum. He looks forward to playground visits now as much as he always did. We attempt to make visits at non-peak times, as there is certainly a size disparity between him and younger children. However, there is no time that we can go and the equipment is appropriate for his use, or designed for his size. To watch him attempt to play on the beloved equipment that no longer meets his needs is heartbreaking.

I know that my son's situation is not unique.

The joy of movement and play should be encouraged. Not everyone outgrows it. Our communities and province should nurture this natural instinct to be active and interactive with peers.

I envision a playground with equipment that fits older children and adults. A meeting place for developmentally and intellectually disabled older children, adults and their families.

Our communities invest so much in infrastructure for physical fitness and wellness. We have walking trails, swimming pools, recreation centres. We need to think about the members of our communities who are not being serviced, who do not benefit easily from what is in place.

I ask that we come together to make this space a reality. I have contacted Playquest Canada, and they assure me that such equipment is available. I offer that in consultation with the disabled adult community, community groups such as Special Olympics, Coalition for Persons with Disabilities, and Vera Perlin Society we could create a space that meets these unique, yet very important needs.

I recognize that this would be an expensive undertaking, and petitioning of business and industry could play a key part. The Rick Hansen Foundation has created a list of potential sponsors for accessible playgrounds which we could explore.

I look forward to hearing from you, and would love to discuss this further. I appreciate your time in reading this letter.

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