

Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities

Elisa and Ashton Smith, Salamanca, NY

This project has impacted my life because:

My son Ashton Smith was born with Cerebral Palsy. He has struggled to play with his friends and siblings on playgrounds because there weren't inclusive or adaptive pieces of equipment to fit his needs. The new Inclusive Playground at Highland Avenue in Salamanca has several pieces of equipment (including an inclusive zip line) that Ashton enjoys playing on.

The most influential policy, system, or environmental change of this project to me was:

The environmental change of including inclusive pieces of playground equipment in the design of the new Highland Avenue Playground ensured that Ashton and others living with disabilities can enjoy recreational opportunities alongside other children.

As a result of this, I/we:

As a result of the new Highland Avenue Playground in Salamanca, children of all ages and abilities can enjoy recreational opportunities that were not available before. As a parent, I can take both of my children to the playground and they can both enjoy their playtime in an equal manner.

What was the emotional connection, self-efficacy, or "ah-ha" moment for this project?

We helped to build the new playground, along with 300 other volunteers. When the ribbon cutting ceremony was over, Ashton wanted to try the zip line. I cried tears of joy helping him on the adaptive zip line and watching him enjoy this for the first time ever in his life!!!

Please note that testimonials may be edited for clarity by the NACDD Communications Department.