



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4101

June 1, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schoolyard Transformation Project at Kennedy Elementary School Unveiled

Project unites City, Scranton School District, Trust for Public Lands, and Valley in Motion for common cause.

IMPORTANT

- **ARPA dollars provided seed funding for the first of several planned schoolyard renovations.**
- **Schoolyard was designed by current third grade students through unique TPL curriculum.**
- **Project will create a new community recreation space in South Scranton.**

SCRANTON, PA. – The City of Scranton joined officials from the Scranton School District and nonprofit organizations Trust for Public Lands (TPL) and Valley In Motion (VIM) on Thurs., June 1, 2023, to celebrate the unveiling of a schoolyard transformation project at John F. Kennedy Elementary School, 2200 Prospect Ave., Scranton.

“This schoolyard transformation project at Kennedy Elementary is just the beginning of our efforts to improve facilities within the Scranton School District and across the City,” Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti said. “By building new, safe places for children and families to play together, we’re strengthening Scranton’s neighborhoods and our school communities.”

Throughout March and April, students in April Zapata’s third grade class participated in a six-week design curriculum coordinated by TPL with support from VIM. Students were encouraged to think about the needs of their community through participatory design work as they measured the existing playground, identified needs for other students, and completed practical lessons about water management, budgeting, and playground design.

“We are so grateful for this opportunity and partnership with the City of Scranton, Valley in Motion, and the Trust for Public Land for a new playground, as well as the opportunity for April Zapata’s class to play an integral role in the planning process,” Scranton School District Superintendent Missy McTiernan. “We eagerly anticipate witnessing the successful completion of the playground, which will bring immense joy to our students.”

Through a spending plan approved by City Council in May 2022, the City allocated a total of \$500,000 for schoolyard transformations. That seed funding has provided TPL with the opportunity to leverage other grant funding across the country, including support from Macy’s and the Robert H. Spitz Foundation among other organizations.

Scranton was previously identified by TPL as one of six pilot cities for its 10-minute walk Park Equity Accelerator program and is the first city in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia to have a community schoolyard project.

“The transformation envisioned at Kennedy will make an important impact in community cohesion, health, and climate resiliency. Everyone should benefit from these impacts,” said Owen Franklin, TPL



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4101

Associate Vice President and Pennsylvania State Director. “We are thrilled to find unique partnership with public and nonprofit organizations to make fair things happen.”

“Every child in Scranton deserves access to a high-quality play and recreation area,” added Gus Fahey, president of Valley In Motion.

Additional information about Scranton’s ARPA plan is online at scrantonpa.gov/arpa.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) OF 2021: ARPA is a \$1.9 trillion federal economic stimulus bill. The City of Scranton has been awarded \$68.7 million in ARPA funds to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its economic impacts. The mission of Scranton’s ARPA program is to give people access to resources, rebuild the infrastructure systems that impact their everyday lives, and foster equitable wealth generation that targets the needs of Scranton residents.

ABOUT TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND: Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 4 million acres of public land, created more than 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors. To learn more, visit tpl.org.

ABOUT VALLEY IN MOTION: Valley In Motion is a non-profit that creates places and events for community connection and engagement across the Lackawanna Valley. For more information, visit valleyinmotion.org.