

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Visits Site of "E Street" Playground A Place for Kids to Play on the Street Where Bruce and the Band Once Did

Gov. Christie Whitman today visited the future site of the E Street playground in Belmar and heralded the success of two of her initiatives aimed at revitalizing and renewing New Jersey communities, the Adopt-A-Neighborhood program in the Department of Community Affairs and the Paying Communities Back Program in the Department of Corrections.

The Governor also praised Salomon Smith Barney for its investment in the playground, as well as its support of additional Adopt-A- Neighborhood projects throughout New Jersey. The Governor applauded other private sector partners, GPU Energy, Home Depot, McDonalds and The Point, and thanked members of the Belmar community who contributed and volunteered on the project.

"Before too long, this playground will be providing children with a place to laugh, play and have fun," said Gov. Whitman. "This playground also provides us with a striking example of what can happen when state government joins with the private sector and the local community members to make a dream become a reality. I am proud that our Adopt-A-Neighborhood program and our Paying Communities Back program have played a vital role in helping Belmar revitalize this neighborhood."

"Hats off to Smith Barney for donating not only the funds to build this playground, but its employees are out here 12 hours a day helping to give young children a safe place to play," Gov. Whitman said.

The Department of Corrections' Paying Communities Back program lent a hand to the project by providing 750 man-hours of inmate labor to clear the ground in preparation for the 17,000 square foot playground.

The E-Street playground, currently under construction in Belmar, is located on E Street, which lent its name to one of New Jersey's most popular rock bands. Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band played some of their first performances at the Belmar Elks Club and the First Calvary Baptist Church, around the corner from the playground site.

"As a result of this collaboration of people and programs, children in this neighborhood will have a safe place to play and to learn," said Community Affairs Commissioner Jane Kenny.

The Adopt-A-Neighborhood program, which was created by Gov. Whitman in 1994, helps coordinate private sector assistance to help neighborhoods in need. The program has coordinated housing rehabilitation, park renovation and playground construction projects in cities spanning from Englewood to Asbury Park.

"It's great to see the outcome of this collaborative effort between state government and the private sector directly benefit the children of the community of Belmar," said Corrections Commissioner Jack Terhune. "To turn a vacant lot into a playground is a real success."

The Paying Communities Back program, which was created by Gov. Whitman in 1997, deploys supervised work crews from the Department of Corrections to perform special service projects that will have a positive impact on cities and towns across the state. State correctional officers closely supervise the minimum custody offenders who participate in the program.

The Governor also applauded the efforts of the Monmouth County Youth AmeriCorp Program of Asbury Park, the Borough of Belmar, Belmar's Neighborhood Preservation Program, and the Belmar Department of Public Works.

"I'd like to thank Smith Barney for their tireless efforts on behalf of the town of Belmar, and Gov. Whitman for her commitment to revitalizing New Jersey's communities. It is this type of community involvement that makes a real difference in improving residents' quality of life," said Ken Pringle, Mayor of Belmar.
