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## Park alive with sound of music

*Evergreen Rotary adds musical instruments to Stagecoach Park » 46*



Skylar Riley, 3, plays a tune May 5 on Pagoda Bells installed at Stagecoach Park in Evergreen. Evergreen Rotary donated the musical park, designed by Durango-based Freenotes Harmony Park, to Evergreen Park and Recreation District.

*Anya Semenov, YourHub*



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# Stagecoach Park gets musical touch

## With help of Rotary Club, built-in instruments added to park in Evergreen

By Josie Klemmaier  
YourHub Reporter

Stagecoach Park in Evergreen soon will be alive with the sound of music, all thanks to a trip Kay D'Evelyn La Montagne took with a friend to Moab, Utah, six years ago.

During a hike, La Montagne said she came upon Moab's popular musical playground in Rotary Park, the first of its kind when it was originally built in 1995. The musical park is filled with large, unique instruments, such as xylophone-like "duets," tuned metal hand drums, free-standing chimes, stacked bells and more, all meant to be played by all ages of visitors and built to withstand the weather.

"I just thought, 'Oh my gosh, I think Evergreen needs this,'" La Montagne said.

When La Montagne returned from her trip, she joined the Evergreen Rotary, since the original musical park was a Rotary project. After years of looking for ways to make the musical park a reality, La Montagne won over her fellow Rotarians when she presented it as a candidate for the organization's annual legacy project and it won.

The \$30,000 project was installed in Evergreen Park and Recreation District's Stagecoach Park, 3229 El Pinal Drive, in late April and is now open. A grand opening will take place in conjunction with Evergreen Rotary's meeting at 7 a.m. June 10.

Built into the cost of the project is \$3,000 in maintenance funds so that it is completely paid for by the Evergreen Rotary's legacy fund, La Montagne said.

The Rotary and the rec district made sure that the noise created by the instruments will stay within the district's regulations, and its placement between Evergreen Parkway and the playground ensures plenty of buffers for the neighborhood nearby.

Heart Cameron, Evergreen Parks



Grace Eye, 9, cleans off a set of chimes alongside her classmates from Montessori School of Evergreen during a service learning trip to Stagecoach Park on May 5. Evergreen Rotary donated the musical park, designed by Durango-based Freenotes Harmony Park. Anya Semenov/YourHub

and Recreation's park operations manager, said working on the musical park has inspired district staff.

They "brought something special to us and opened our eyes and got us out of the box a little bit, too," he said.

The instruments were created by Durango-based Freenotes Harmonician Richard Cooke. They are tuned in a way that any way they are played, they create harmonic sounds, claiming "no wrong notes," according to the company's website.

Cooke was building the instruments in his garage with one employee until 2010, when he expand-

ed into a warehouse and began taking his work to trade shows, said CEO Donna Codd. Now, the company occupies 10,500 square feet and takes in \$3 million in annual sales.

Throughout the evolution of the company, Dodd said they have seen time and again that the musical parks bring families and communities together.

"It's not like your normal typical playground where kids play and the adults sit on the bench and just watch," Codd said. "Kids will teach the parents how to play them."

At one inner-city park in Minneapolis, Codd said, college students monitored a music park in the high-crime area and found that in three

years, no one vandalized it. "The theory is that we think music in the community reduces vandalism," she said.

Gwyn Rogers brought her two young grandchildren to Stagecoach park May 4 and again May 5 after they enjoyed the musical instruments so much.

"I think it's a great addition to the park," she said. "When we came yesterday, they were so excited. They played and played and played with it."

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