

Build Jake's Place

Build Jake's Place is a New Jersey non-profit, located in Pennsauken, NJ, whose mission is to construct and operate all-inclusive playgrounds and play experiences allowing children and adults with special needs the joy of playing and interacting together.

Build Jake's Place envisions all kids playing together. The US Census shows approximately 10% of South Jersey children have a disability; thousands more in the greater Delaware Valley. Many of these children cannot play on a playground – even an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved playground, because of physical or other limitations.

- BJP's website is www.buildjakesplace.org
- Build Jake's Place constructed its first playground at Challenge Grove in Cherry Hill, NJ in 2011 (now Jake's Place at Challenge Grove), with the cooperation of Camden County Parks Department. The playground, constructed by over 300 members of the community is ranked by USA Today as one of the country's top ten inclusive playgrounds. A new, even more spectacular, inclusive playground, "Jake's Place Delran" will be built in Delran, NJ with the cooperation of Delran government and citizens. It is planned for Jake's Place Delran to open in 2018.
- The final cost of the first playground was approximately \$600,000, mostly given in small donations by community members and augmented by a few grants. These include a \$50,000 grant from CVS, as well as generous grants from BHHS Fox & Roach and Camden County (through Green Acres). Gifts in kind came from many area organizations and merchants including R.E.Pierson Construction and Ballard Spahr.
- Jake's Place Playground Grand Opening was October 15, 2011, attended by hundreds of local families, dignitaries and the media.
- Build Jake's Place was inspired by 2 ½ year old Jacob Myles Cummings Nasto, who died from complications after his fourth open heart surgery. Jake was born with a rare birth defect HLHS - Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, literally half a heart. He was treated at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
- Jake visited playgrounds as part of his physical therapy but was often unable to use the apparatus. His parents, Kathleen Cummings Nasto and Joseph Nasto, assembled a qualified board to seek public and private funding for "Build Jake's Place." BJP has consulted on playground renovation and construction with other communities.
- Build Jake's Place is a 501(c)3 state and federal registered charity.
- Build Jake's Place has two other programs - the Camden County NJ Miracle League which provides people with disabilities a chance to play America's favorite pastime – baseball, playing on the "Boundless Field" (adjoining Jake's Place) built by Camden County Parks and Camden County Freeholders. In the "Miracle League," children with disabilities pair with a "buddy" – typically a normally abled child or adult. Buddies assist by allowing the child with a disability the joy of playing ball. Buddies often form lasting relationships with the child they aid. In addition, "Beneficial Buses" (a program funded by Beneficial Bank) provides the funds for buses to bring children with disabilities to enjoy lunch and a day at Jake's Place Playground and Boundless Field.