

DeBartolo Family Foundation Presents

the

The Spirit of Humanity Award

to the

Freedom Playground Foundation

Article Submitted by DeBartolo Family Foundation
Photo by Artistic Photography by Glenda



Shown:

Standing from Left, Toni Beddingfield, Mother of Stefani Busansky and Grandmother of Sarah Busansky, Joella Clanton, Board Member, Stefani Busansky, Director Freedom Playground Foundation, Tom Johnston, COT Urban Planner, Christine Rover, Board Member, Donna Bevis, Owner of Ashley's Coffee Shop and Spirit of Humanity Nominator and Jim Reese, Legislative Aide to Councilman John Dingfelder.

Seated on Left, Sarah Busansky and Seated on Right, Lisa DeBartolo, Executive Vice President, DeBartolo Holdings, LLC

The DeBartolo Family Foundation awarded the Spirit of Humanity Award and donated \$25,000 Thursday morning to the Freedom Playground Foundation, which earlier this year built an accessible playground at Macfarlane Park, 1700 N. MacDill Ave.

The Freedom Playground Foundation, Inc. creates community inclusive parks and playgrounds for people of all ages and disabilities. They support recreation and sports to promote respect and acceptance of disabilities while fostering friendships and having fun.

The DeBartolo Family Foundation recognizes the dedication and support that The Freedom Playground provides these individuals with a \$25,000 donation along with the Spirit of Humanity Award.

Founded in 2004, Freedom Playground Foundation, Inc, a 501 © (three) organization is the City of Tampa's first universally designed playground in Macfarlane Park. Freedom Playground includes elements found in traditional accessible playground models as well as additional amenities such as art, nature, water and musical instruments.

The Playground Foundation is currently building a second playground at Grady Elementary called Imagining Possibilities. A third playground, First Coast Freedom Playground is under development in Fernandina Beach, Florida. The organization also supports the Rays Wheelchair Softball team and has started a pilot program for aquatic therapy with the City of Tampa Parks and Recreation Department.

The DeBartolo Family Foundation is pleased and proud to recognize The Freedom Playground Foundation as a grass roots organization that understands the challenges and more so the opportunities available for children and adults with physical disabilities. The playground represents humanitarian effort where tireless individuals give back to our communities." said Lisa DeBartolo, Executive Vice President, DeBartolo Holdings, LLC."

"Can she play?"

That simple question inspired the creation of Freedom Playground. "A little girl at the park was asking about our daughter, Sarah. Sand and wood chips prevented her from playing independently in her wheelchair. Sarah's disability didn't limit her desire to play; she just needed a more accessible place to play." states Stefani Busansky, Director of the Freedom Playground Foundation. "We are especially proud of receiving the Spirit of Humanity Award from the DeBartolo Family Foundation because it embodies our mission of creating places where people in the community regardless of ability feel connected and welcome. I am grateful to the DeBartolo Family for supporting our project and for the award which will allow us to continue to build more playgrounds, but I am most appreciative of them recognizing the 'Spirit of Humanity' in our project and in the countless other projects they support in the Tampa Bay area."

For more information on The Freedom Playground, please call Stefani Busansky at 813.254.3804 or visit their website at www.freedomplayground.org.

The DeBartolo Family Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation created by the members of the Edward J. DeBartolo, Jr. family to benefit local communities. The Foundation annually awards scholarships to high school students, provides grants to individuals and organizations with exceptional requirements, and presents the Spirit of Humanity Award, honoring non-profit, grass roots organizations that provide extraordinary assistance to Tampa Bay residents with special needs. *tbb*

For more information, visit the foundation's website at www.debartolofamilyfoundation.com or call the Foundation office at (813) 964.8302