



Blue Jackets Foundation Partners with City and East Columbus Civic Association to Re-Open Krumm Park

R.J. Umberger joins kids at Blue Jackets-themed street hockey rink

By Blue Jackets Staff - Writer

After being shuttered for four months due to budget cuts, Krumm Park Recreation Center was full of life again Wednesday as many community members and their children gathered to celebrate the official re-opening of the park with a ceremony followed by a rousing game of street hockey.

R.J. Umberger, center for the Columbus Blue Jackets, dropped the ceremonial puck for the first game on the park's recently revamped street hockey rink which bears the Blue Jackets' logo in honor of the Blue Jackets Foundation's \$21,000 grant to help re-open Krumm.

Krumm Park was one of 11 recreation centers that had been closed this past February due to city budget cuts. Thanks to a partnership between the Columbus Blue Jackets Foundation, Columbus City Council and the East Columbus Civic Association, the center will be open for summer playground season and into the fall with after-school programs through December.

City Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson, who actively lobbied her fellow council members to approve partial funding for Krumm from the city's hotel/motel tax, recognized the re-opening as a community success made "in the spirit of collaboration."

"The nearest recreation facility is Brentnel and that's too far for our young people to travel. I kept stressing to make sure Krumm Park reopened and that we needed to find a partner," Tyson said. "We asked community leaders to step up and figure out a way to help. The people who stepped up were the Columbus Blue Jackets Foundation."

The Blue Jackets Foundation has been involved with Krumm Park for seven years through the Columbus Ice Hockey Club Diversity Task Force and other youth programs which expose kids to hockey, Blue Jackets Foundation Board Member Cathy Lyttle explained.

"Krumm already had a connection to us, so it was easy to say we'd like to help out a place that we know," Lyttle said.

"Our founder, John H. McConnell, knew hockey teams and hockey players could make a big difference in the community, and I think there is no better way to honor his memory and the good work of the Columbus Blue Jackets than by helping the city re-open this important recreation center."

Umberger and Blue Jackets mascot, Stinger, teamed up with local kids for a couple games of street hockey to break in the new rink after the ceremony.

"It is special to me to be able to come out during the summer to connect with the community and especially rewarding to see yourself impacting little kids," said Umberger. "These kids will love being able to connect with hockey. It's a great sport, a lot of fun, good exercise and a great passion."