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## Perris Partnership Promotes Imaginative Play



Perris Mayor Michael Vargas lends a hand to a youngster from the City's Boys & Girls Club during a recent construction project using "imagination playground blocks."

Boys and girls at the Boys & Girls of Perris showed off their new play equipment before City elected officials who welcomed the new additions as a way to stimulate young imaginations while benefitting from physical exercise.

The City's Boys & Girls Club obtained the foam rubber "imagination playground blocks" thanks to a partnership between CarMax Inc., America's largest used car retailer and KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit organization providing play equipment to children across the country.

The idea behind the "I Playground" is to let the imagination run wild and create all sorts of shapes, tools and devices from the foam blocks.

About 20 members of the Boys & Girls Club took part in assembling an assortment of structures—walls, slides, geometrical designs.

Some looked downright otherworldly, and that's great, said Chris Petersen, general manager of CarMax in Murrieta, which donated the \$15,000 worth of play equipment to the Perris club.

"The 'I Playground' stimulates a child's imagination and lets them think about science, technology and engineering," Petersen said. "It's gets them thinking about being creative."



Perris City Councilman Malcolm Corona helps in a building project designed to stimulate children's imaginations: "It's great to be able to support our youth."

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas and City Councilmembers Malcolm Corona and Rita Rogers came to witness the demonstration of the "I Playground" on March 3. They liked what they saw.

Vargas came with his two grandsons, Isaiah, 4, and Aiden, 2, who attacked the blue foam equipment with gusto.

"We've got some good stuff going on here today," Vargas said. "It's important for our kids to have a safe place to play after school and to have safe play equipment to use. This is fantastic."

Vargas lauded the partnership between KaBOOM!, CarMax, the Boys & Girls Club and the City to bring the "I Playground" to reality.

"We need these collaborations," he said. "The City cannot do everything by itself"

The three elected officials pitched in to help build some of the play structures, chatting at times to talk with the young builders about exactly what was being constructed. Corona praised the Boys & Girls Club for its collaborations to make the "I Playground" a reality.

"It's great to be able to support our youth," he said. "Kids are learning to use their imagination, learning trial and error as they work together and are learning to work as a team. I am very pleased with the direction our City is moving."



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers smiles as she looks over a project created as part of the "I Playground" program.

Rogers said she found the "I Playground" allows youngster the chance to create magic from a blank space. Like her colleagues, she also praised the partnership between the City, business and nonprofit organizations that results in good things for Perris youth. She praised the cohesive relationship among the City's elected representatives for bringing good things to Perris.

"We are always looking to improve and expand our parks and our recreation opportunities," Rogers said.

Jackie Ramos, chief executive officer of the Boys & Girls Club of Perris, said the organization provides sports, recreational and after-school programs to 800 youths 5 to 17 years of age. The organization is housed on the City Hall Campus. Ramos said she is pleased with the support and cooperation the club receives from the City.

"Our collaboration with the City of Perris is great," she said.



Members of the Perris Boys & Girls Club finish up a building project using materials from the "I Playground" program.

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