

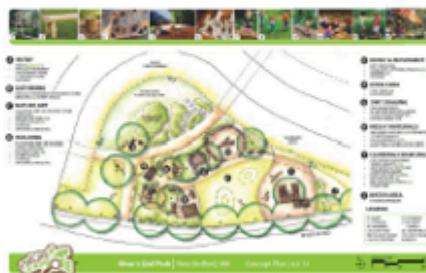
City Celebrates the Official Opening of River's End Park

Join us to celebrate

A beautiful new park on the banks of the Acushnet River

**Grand Opening of
River's End Park
River Rd, New Bedford
Sat., Oct. 4, 2014
10 am – 2pm**

Bring the family and experience a fun filled day with activities, prizes, and special guests!



Nature Explore in collaboration with the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimension Educational Research Foundation, has designed a unique playground to provide "intentional experiences and create space that give children the opportunity to better understand and appreciate the natural world".

Everyone is welcome to this FREE family event!

Bring a shell, stone, pine cone or other natural object to add to the Building and Nature Art Areas.

New Bedford Parks, Recreation & Beaches, the Department of Public Infrastructure and Mayor Jon Mitchell joined with members of the community to celebrate the addition of a beautiful new park located on River Road in New Bedford's North End along the banks of the Acushnet River.

"New Bedford is proud to have a variety of beautiful parks and public spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. Well-

designed, interesting, and inviting places like River's End Park draw people together as a community and improve the quality of life for residents," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

"This park is unique in that it also brings us closer to the water and more connected with our natural environment," stated the Mayor.

The park features a beautiful paved patio with views of the river for family gatherings, picnics or quiet contemplation, a walking path and a very unique playground.

The playground at River's End was designed by Nature Explore in collaboration with the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimension Educational Research Foundation to provide "intentional experiences and create space that give children the opportunity to better understand and appreciate the natural world." Elements of the playground encourage moving, building, creating music, climbing and crawling.

"In our fast paced world it can be difficult for families to find the time to slow down and take in nature. This playground encourages children to have hands on experiences with natural objects," said Director of Parks, Recreation & Beaches Mary Rapoza.

It is becoming more apparent that children benefit in many ways from exposure to open ended play spaces where they can interact with nature and others. Rachael Sharman, Lecturer in Psychology at University of the Sunshine Coast states "kids are learning self-discipline and self-control, taking personal responsibility for their own risk and ability evaluation, thereby increasing autonomy and competence." The children interpret the spaces themselves acting out stories, creating dance or art. This self expression provides a "language rich environment" promoting literacy.

The park was funded by an Urban Self Help Grant (now the PARC program) from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and by the

City of New Bedford. The Department of Public Infrastructure contributed labor and materials to the project. The design of the playground was coordinated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches and constructed by the Department of Facilities and Fleet Management.