

Heart of America and PNC Bank Collaborate to Transform La Creche Early Childhood Center's Outdoor Space

[Minneapolis, MN] – [05/01/24] - Heart of America is proud to announce its most recent partnership with PNC Bank to reimagine the outdoor play area at La Creche Early Childhood Center in North Minneapolis, Minnesota. This collaborative effort, made possible by the generous support of PNC's Grow Up Great program and volunteers, will officially open on Wednesday, May 1.

Design plans for the project integrated the need for safe, stimulating surroundings with a nature-filled aesthetic that encourages creative play. Playground features will include a playhouse, art station, stage, and labyrinth. Elements such as flowerbeds, gardens, and other organic features define the space, inspiring a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world in young visitors who might never have travelled outside the city.

"We are grateful for this most generous investment and design," says Phyllis Sloan-Dixon, Executive Director at La Creche since 1997. "[The new playground] will inspire the minds and hearts of our children as they explore, discover, further develop and grow through play in a safe, beautiful space, meant just for them."

Children who attend La Creche are equally excited to jump in and enjoy the new facilities. "You are making us a park!" one child said excitedly to a PNC volunteer.

The official launch event for the new playground will take place at La Creche Early Childhood Center on May 1, with ribbon cutting scheduled for 12pm.

For this project, Heart of America, a leading nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing educational spaces, worked alongside La Creche and PNC Bank to co-create the outdoor play area. "This project is a prime example of our commitment to education equity," explains Jill Hardy Heath, CEO of Heart of America. "Through innovative partnerships with organizations such as PNC, we're delivering the transformative impact these kids deserve. As always, our team has worked collaboratively in considering this community's unique needs, while ensuring the space we create is one that children will truly enjoy using."

PNC has been at the forefront of early childhood education for two decades through its renowned program, PNC Grow Up Great®. Collaborating with education experts, PNC ensures the delivery of high-quality educational experiences and resources for kids aged 0-5 years.

For more information about PNC's Grow Up Great initiative, visit <https://www.pnc.com/en/about-pnc/corporate-responsibility/grow-up-great.html>.

For more information about Heart of America and its transformative projects, visit heartofamerica.org.