Carrfour Leads Affordable Playground Project

By Jennifer LeClaire | Miami

MIAMI—More than 200 volunteers joined Carrfour Supportive Housing, Miami-Dade Homeless Trust, the Knight Foundation and KaBOOM! to build playground in less than eight hours on Saturday. The playground fulfills the dreams of hundreds of formerly homeless children who live at Verde Gardens, an affordable housing community in Homestead, FL.

The playground project was launched months earlier, when children who live in the affordable housing community were asked to put crayon to paper to draw their dream playground. On March 23, volunteers gathered to build the playground from scratch, incorporating several elements from the children’s original drawings.

“Our partnership with KaBOOM! and the Knight Foundation has brought happiness into the lives of hundreds of formerly homeless children living at Verde Gardens and in the Homestead area,” says Stephanie Berman-Eisenberg, president of Carrfour, the affordable housing community’s developer and operator. “The overwhelming outpouring of support from everyone that volunteered their time has resulted in a new playground that will make a positive difference in the lives of our community’s children for years to come.”

Verde Gardens is a $20 million partnership between the Homeless Trust and Carrfour. The affordable housing community serves formerly homeless families and individuals with special needs. The workforce housing community includes a 22-acre on-site organic farm and public farmers market that is operated by residents.

The 145-unit Verde Gardens is home to about 580 formerly homeless residents, including 367 children. Prior to the partnership with KaBOOM! and the Knight Foundation, the community included a very small playground structure only suitable for children under the age of five. The community’s new playground will provide hundreds of children of all ages with a safe and fun place to play.

In addition to the affordable housing community-built playground, the new play area also includes Imagination Playground in a Cart, a playspace concept designed by architect David Rockwell to encourage child-directed, unstructured free play. With reconfigurable loose parts, Imagination Playground in a Cart allows children to constantly change their environment and design their own course of play.