

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Daly City
Leilani Ramos
lramos@dalcity.org

Magical Bridge Foundation
Olenka Villarreal
olenka@magicalbridge.org

Magical Bridge Playground Announces Inclusive, Multigenerational Fun to Daly City, Fighting Loneliness Head-On

Daly City, CA (March 5, 2024) The City of Daly City announced a new partnership with Palo Alto-based Magical Bridge Foundation to create a Magical Bridge playground at Hillside Park on Lausanne Avenue.

Magical Bridge Foundation creates inclusive spaces where people of all abilities come together and connect. The organization designs playgrounds for all ages and abilities by removing the physical and social barriers of today's typical playgrounds to give everyone in the community a place to play, learn, and connect.

"Magical Bridge is more than a playground - it is a community hub," says Olenka Villarreal, founder and CEO of Magical Bridge Foundation. "We incorporate the physical and social needs of a community not only through our playgrounds but through our many programs that encourage kindness and magical connections for the whole family."

Daly City became the first city in the nation to declare loneliness a public health crisis in February, citing the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory about the devastating impact of the epidemic of loneliness and isolation. Creating public spaces that are designed to promote social connection, like Magical Bridge, is one of the six foundational pillars the Surgeon General lays out to address the crisis and advance social connection.

"Daly City's Magical Bridge will be a critical stride forward in the City and County's collective effort to combat loneliness as these spaces are renowned for designs, programs and volunteer experiences that foster much-needed community connections," said Villarreal.

Magical Bridge and the City are also excited to use this project to engage the City's youth in universal design, inspire interest in ways Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) can promote inclusivity, and promote civic engagement. The youth engagement process will culminate in a design competition in which students will present their ideas for making public spaces more welcoming for all to local leadership.

Daly City's Magical Bridge will be the third playground in San Mateo County, following one in Redwood City which opened 2020 and one at CuriOdyssey which opened 2021. Magical Bridge Foundation has six others completed in the Bay Area, along with one in New Zealand. Several more local and international projects are underway.

Daly City's Mayor Juslyn C. Manalo expressed enthusiasm about the project, stating, "I have long advocated to bring a Magical Bridge Playground to Daly City when local parents of Mikey Enriquez reached out. The Magical Bridge Playground embodies our City's values of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. It will serve as a beacon of joy and community spirit, bringing people of all backgrounds and abilities together to share in the simple pleasures of play. The City's partnership with Magical Bridge will serve as a pathway to combating loneliness and building stronger social connections in Daly City."

Key features of the Magical Bridge Playground include:

- Wheelchair-friendly ramps and pathways
- Sensory-mindful play zones for individuals with sensory sensitivities
- Adaptive swings and merry-go-rounds
- Inclusive seating areas and picnic spots
- Interactive musical elements
- Dedicated quiet spaces for relaxation
- Slide hill with various sliding options
- Community treehouse and stage
- Tactile artwork

The project is made possible through a collaboration between Daly City government, Assemblymember Phil Ting, private donors, and community partners. The Magical Bridge Foundation will assist Daly City in securing additional funding, as needed.

Construction is slated to begin in late 2024, with an anticipated grand opening at the end of 2025.

"I have driven multiple times from Daly City to Redwood City, braving the traffic and distance just to visit the extraordinary Magical Bridge Playground with my son who has autism," says Daly City mom Joyce Cabrera. "This place holds a special spot in our family's hearts because it single-handedly removes countless physical and social barriers for people of all abilities, teaching how inclusion can effortlessly be part of everybody's daily life. We are so excited Magical Bridge Playground is coming to our community!"

For more information about the Daly City Magical Bridge Playground project, including updates on construction progress and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.magicalbridge.org or follow us on social media (@MagicalBridge).

About Magical Bridge Foundation

Magical Bridge Foundation, a non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, creates multigenerational playgrounds, parks, and programs for more inclusive communities. Drawing from over a decade of research-driven innovation, Magical Bridge designs playgrounds for all ages and abilities by removing the physical and social barriers of today's typical playgrounds to give everyone in the community a place to play, learn, and connect. With eight award-winning playgrounds currently open and many more in development around the world, Magical Bridge proudly collaborates with cities, developers, and landscape architects to bring inclusive play and companion programming to public parks, schools, zoos, and museums. In addition to a turnkey design-build model, licensing opportunities ensure the Magical Bridge brand, designs, and programs are catalysts for kinder and more inclusive societies everywhere. Magical Bridge invites everyone to join the movement toward a brighter future where inclusion means everyone.

About the City of Daly City

The City of Daly City is located at the northernmost edge of San Mateo County adjacent to San Francisco and extends from the Pacific Ocean on the west to nearly San Francisco Bay on the east. Daly City, central to two of the Bay Area's major job growth zones of San Francisco and Silicon Valley, has become a regional hub for retail, healthcare, and small business. Daly City is home to a diverse community, with more than half of its population foreign born, and a Welcoming City for all.

###

[End of Press Release]