

# Stein Park Playground

Detroit, MI

SETTING



Urban

COST



N/A

SIZE



0.7 acres

OPEN SINCE

October  
2018

GRANTEE

Local  
non-profit

# A playful centerpiece for a neighborhood park

## Project Overview

Stein Park is located in the heart of Cody Rouge, a predominantly Black residential neighborhood in the west side of Detroit, with one of the largest concentrations of youth in the city. In 2018, a long-time community dream to renovate Stein Park Playground was made possible by a Built to Play grant. The renovation project brought together a large group of over 17 stakeholders, including the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance (CRCAA), Detroit Parks and Recreation, and community volunteers. The playground is one of many planned improvements CRCAA has for Stein Park.

Today, the space is a vibrant and multifunctional neighborhood amenity for kids and teens to stay active. It is also the center of gravity for CRCAA and other neighborhood events like Family Fun Days.



I’m most proud of how many people from different organizations, both within and outside the community, were able to build it and get it done.

KENYETTA CAMPBELL  
CRCAA Executive Director & Project Lead



“Parents have a place to stay and entertain their younger kids while their other kids are playing sports.”

–Kenyetta Campbell

↑  
A **small basketball area** adjacent to the playground invite older kids to play and cross into the play space. Further into the park, there is a new full size basketball field, a baseball field, and also a football field.



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Varied play areas offer a distinct experience for all ages: an early childhood area, an all age kids area, and a **fitness area** that is intended for teens, but also utilized heavily by seniors.



↑  
The playground has a **distinct connection to the surrounding neighborhood**, with the use of school colors in its play features and its strategic location between the local school and the bus stop. Students frequent the park after school while they wait for the bus.

# Origin story

## THE SPARK – AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN A WELL-LOVED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSET

Kenyetta Campbell, project lead and long-time Cody Rouge resident, was essential in bringing the community together to improve the underused park – a longstanding local priority.



## DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION – COMING TOGETHER AROUND PLAY, RAIN OR SHINE

Build Day was possible through the collaboration of volunteers assembled by Kenyetta and the CRCAA, KABOOM!, and the City of Detroit. While Build Day did not come without a challenge from mother nature; construction was largely successful – local kids who lent a hand are proud today to say, “I helped build that!”

“Everything you see is either drawn from the kids or what people verbatim said they wanted to see during meetings”

–Kenyetta Campbell



## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION – CONVENING LONGTIME PARK USERS

KABOOM!’s community engagement expertise and tools proved useful for reaching kids and residents. Engagement sessions were intentionally held at the nearby high school to reach teens, who drew pictures of what they wanted to see. A key part of the playground design is the climbing tower, which can be directly tied to the engagement with kids, who eagerly asked for a tall play feature.



ALL IMAGES: KABOOM!



# Lessons learned



OUTCOME

**A FLAGSHIP SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY.**



“Since we were able to get the new equipment out here, **it brought a lot of alumni back with their families — not only alumni weekends and 10-year reunions, but everyday**”

– Kenyetta Campbell

LESSON

**Enhance existing community assets.**

Invest in the spaces that the community already values but that need a little love — the transformation can inspire regular use and community pride.



OUTCOME

**A MULTIGENERATIONAL GATHERING SPACE.**



In addition to the typical users of playgrounds — guardians and young kids — Stein Park attracts a wide range of age groups, from teens gathering after school to a group of seniors taking advantage of the Fitcore equipment and parents playing basketball with their kids.

LESSON

**Engage who you want to show up.**

Think expansively about the groups a play space can serve — even those who seem too old for the slide — and incorporate those voices in the design process.



OUTCOME

**A PLAY SPACE EMBEDDED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.**



Teens engaged for a focus group at Cody High school stated that they mostly walk, bike, or use public transit to get to the playground.

LESSON

**Site play spaces near schools, transit stops, and other sources of foot traffic.**

Incorporate play into people’s existing routes and routines by siting play space near the places they already use and move through every day.