

Greater Manchester

Kids' Kove rebuild to begin Wednesday

◆ **Merrimack:** Organizers have raised \$90,000 for the playground revitalization project.

By **KIMBERLY HOUGHTON**
Union Leader Correspondent

MERRIMACK — About 70 holes have been dug in preparation for the construction of the new and improved Kids' Kove playground, which will officially get under way on Wednesday.

A crew from Maine Drilling and Blasting has been working at the site for the past two days, laying more than 40 bags of concrete and drilling 74 holes. The Auburn company is contributing labor, equipment and finances to the extensive playground revitalization.

"We are pretty much family, and all of our personnel live in this region, with many of our workers residing in the Merrimack community," said Jim Jillson, supervisor. "This is a great project."

About \$90,000 has been raised for the new playground, designed to update and expand the failing play structure that has been in place for 20 years. The wooden playground has sustained significant damage from the elements, leading to deteriorating wood and unsafe play areas, according to organizers.

The revitalization project will not tear down the existing playground, but rather maintain its aesthetics while incorporating new lumber, some green features, toddler section and handicap accessible play areas.

Starting Wednesday, rain or shine, the Friends of the Kids' Kove and Rotary Club of Merrimack will spearhead efforts to begin rebuilding the playground. About 500 volunteers will be assisting with the project, which is expected to be complete by late Sunday afternoon.

The project has relied heavily on support from the community, and workers from Maine Drilling and Blasting said they were honored to volunteer their services for the worthwhile cause.

The business is offering its equipment to help with the construction work, and will also provide general assistance at the build site next week, according to Jillson.

"Their assistance couldn't be more timely to get this project started," Colleen Farley of the Friends of Kids' Kove said of Maine Drilling and Blasting.

New parallel bars, slides, swings and a suspension bridge have been included in the design of the new play structure, and a toddler area will be added with a sand box and spring horses. The existing sand-based ground surface will be eliminated, and a 12-inch bed of wood chips will be installed. A play boat will also be built, along with a canopy and picnic tables.

Volunteers are still needed, and may contact Peter Giacapuzzi at 424-2168 or pgiacapuzzi@gmail.com for more information.



From left, Andrew Prince and Marty Saunders of Maine Drilling and Blasting dig a hole in preparation for new playground equipment at Kids' Kove in Merrimack. The equipment operator is Mike Waterman.

KIMBERLY HOUGHTON

