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## Community bands together on renovation of Pike Place Market playground

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A/E Editor

If you were to walk past the unique kiosk-shaped building at 1531 Western Ave. you might not know that for over a decade children attending the Pike Market Child Care and Preschool have been playing and having fun behind its doors.

The structure, which began life as the Market Heritage Center in 1998, has been used as a playground by PMCCP since early 2012. Last month work wrapped up on a years long community led and funded effort to renovate and enhance the space.

SHED Architecture and Design designed the renovations on a pro bono basis.

The playground is located directly across the street from the back entrance to PMCCP's home in the market, which it has occupied for over 40 years. It has a mix of indoor and outdoor play space, a bathroom and a sink area. There is around 768 square feet of covered indoor and 845 square feet of outside play space. Originally designed by Public47 Architects as a museum and information kiosk, the space was in need of significant updates to fully realize its potential as a playground.

Major goals were to create a space that promoted curiosity and exploration and that felt fresh, bright and engaging for all the age groups that PMCCP serves (from birth to aged five). "Before the renovation we noticed that the kids weren't really inspired by the playground and it really needed updating, especially the floors," Ilene Stark interim executive director and past executive director (2012 - 2019, 1989 - 1995) at PMCCP explained. "The space was also really dark so getting more lighting in was a priority," she continued.

Updates include new concrete floors in the covered area which are perfect for drawing on with chalk, new synthetic turf in the outside area which replaces a planter, deck, and steps to maximize flexible outdoor play space and a new outside climbing wall. Inside new LED lighting has totally



Photos by Emma Hinchliffe [\[enlarge\]](#)

**A set of coiling roll up doors at the front of the structure have been replaced with glass.**



[\[enlarge\]](#)

**New synthetic turf and a climbing wall has been added to the outside play area.**

transformed the space. The entire structure has also been given a fresh lick of paint with reds, blues and yellows that mimic the colors of the market. SHED also added a new storage area, drinking fountain, and updated the bathroom.

Probably the biggest architectural change was the removal of a set of coiling roll up doors that were originally installed for the Heritage Center and were designed to be wide open during the day and buttoned down at night. Those have been replaced with glass, which is partially covered with a mural to protect the children and staff's privacy. The mural, which features whimsical animal characters in a market setting, was designed by local artist La Ru (Lauren Rudeck) who owns Robot vs Sloth in the market.

SHED contributed \$20,000 of in-kind service and much more time and energy to get the project over the finish line. The design team also included landscape architect Berger Partnership and Luma Lighting Design, who also provided work on a pro bono basis.

Stark said everyone at PMCCP is absolutely thrilled with how the playground has turned out and that the kids are really enjoying it. They began playing in the space in March. Planning and fundraising for the project began five years ago and ground was broken last summer. SSCI was the general contractor.

Stark estimates the project cost upwards of \$500,000. Most of the funding came from local community groups and private donors and many individuals volunteered hours of their time and labor to bring the reimagined playground to life. "This is a project that couldn't have happened without the support of the community and is a great example of the great community we have in and around the market," Stark said.

She highlighted the following groups and individuals for their support:

- The Pike Place Market Foundation
- The Pike Market PDA, which owns the playground building and rents it to the PMCCP at an affordable rate
- Helen Stusser, DeeAnn Burman and more than 40 from the Downtown Walkers group with their friends and family which raised the majority of funding
- The Committee of 33 – who raised funds for the mural
- Robot and Sloth for creating the mural
- Don Gordon; volunteer project manager for five years
- Grace Leong: PMCCP board member, architect and playground committee member
- Ed Santander: PMCCP alum parent and committee member
- Employees Community Fund of Boeing and BNSF who provided a grant for the project
- Individual donors including Schultz Family Foundation, Harris Family Fund and the Lorig Family

The PMCCP is hosting an official launch and fundraising event at the playground on April 18. Funds will be raised to help purchase new playground materials. Funds from event sponsorships will be used to support the centers tuition assistance program, which over the past 40 years has made it possible for working families to have access to high quality, affordable and inclusive early learning, and care. Last year alone, PMCCP made it possible for up to 65% of families of low to middle income to attend the program. PMCCP's "mission is to ensure all people regardless of income have access to higher learning and care." For more information and to RSVP for the event please email Ilene Stark at [ilene@pikemarketkids.org](mailto:ilene@pikemarketkids.org). More information on PMCCP is at <https://pikemarketkids.org/>

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