

## **Everychild Foundation Universally Accessible Playground Opens in Los Angeles ~ Playground to Serve the Largest Demographic of Physically Challenged Children in the Nation**

LOS ANGELES – (February 28, 2008) – Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital announced today the opening of the Everychild Foundation Universally Accessible Playground on its downtown campus. The public playground was designed to accommodate children with wheelchairs, leg braces, crutches and other barriers that usually leave them sidelined at traditional playgrounds. The playground will serve the largest demographic of physically challenged children in the nation. With more than 55,000 outpatient pediatric visits annually, Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital treats more children with crippling disorders than any other orthopaedic facility in the nation.

“I want to commend the joint efforts of the Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital, Shane’s Inspiration and the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks for creating a world-class playground,” expressed Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. “This state-of-the-art playground will serve more than 125,000 children annually, which will make it the most visited universally accessible playground in the nation.”

The nearly half-acre play area, designed in partnership with Shane’s Inspiration, features special equipment in a modern and creative environment where children with and without disabilities can play together. The playground has sturdy foam ground cover to protect children from falls and is wheelchair friendly. The park features colorful slides, tubes, bridges, swings, interactive puzzles, a quiet area, a misting dragon and lush landscaping for children ages 2 to 12. Through a joint use agreement with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, the playground will be open to the public seven days a week.

“With the opening of this delightful and unique playground, we are expanding our mission of care for children with musculoskeletal conditions regardless of the family’s ability to pay,” said James V. Luck, Jr., M.D., president, CEO and medical director of Orthopaedic Hospital. “The playground provides a safe and stimulating outdoor

haven for children in the community regardless of their physical limitations to come together, play and learn from each other.”

"Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital continues to bring valuable resources to our young people by providing them with the expert medical care and personal attention they need. The addition of this playground is an extension of the Hospital's continued commitment to building stronger communities and providing for children," said Councilwoman Jan Perry. "This new public park is a great partnership that will benefit the entire neighborhood."

It is estimated that more than 42,000 children with disabilities and over 85,000 able-bodied children will visit the playground each year and it will be used by more children in a single year than any other universally accessible playground in the nation. The playground will benefit pediatric patients, their siblings and children from the entire community for years to come, as well as serve as a model for similar projects in other communities.

Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital was selected by the Everychild Foundation as its sole 2006 grantee and was awarded a lead gift of \$925,000 to support the construction of the playground.

"This playground will be an incredible asset to the community in a multitude of ways. It will allow children with disabilities who are used to sitting on the sidelines the chance to engage in play and feel like regular kids. It will also be utilized as a therapeutic and teaching facility for the Hospital and will fill a niche in a neighborhood lacking adequate, safe playgrounds for its youngsters," said Jacqueline Caster, president and founder of Everychild Foundation. "Children with and without disabilities will learn acceptance and tolerance as they play side by side."