

# Hope Begins Here

by Pete Sechler, PLA, AICP, MBA



Above, Left: New Hope June 2021: The Backyard and Garden converted a row of parking into a new play area and resurfaced the asphalt into a hardcourt play area.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS GILLYARD PHOTOGRAPHY.



Left: Original Site Photo, May 2018: The existing site had no outdoor play opportunity, limited greenspace and aged parking.

PHOTO CREDIT: PETE SECHLER.

Above, Right: New Hope June 2021: The Garden is scaled for children and includes many small details that allow for discovery, interaction, and personal space.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS GILLYARD PHOTOGRAPHY.

GAI's Community Solutions Group (GAI) collaborated with New Hope for Kids to bring a new "Backyard and Garden" to this important place of healing. New Hope for Kids is a nonprofit grief counseling center that serves children aged 3-19 in Maitland, Florida. New Hope operates the 'Center for Grieving Children' and 'Wish for Kids' to help families navigate some of life's most difficult challenges, including terminal illness and the death of a parent.

The opportunity to assist with the outdoor play and garden area was brought to GAI by Elena Pathak AIA, of KTH Architects, Inc. who also serves on the New Hope Board of Directors / Building Committee. The New Hope facility did not have an outdoor activity area and space there was very limited. The existing site plan was a basic building pad surrounded by small areas of foundation planting and a perimeter parking bay.

GAI's team met with New Hope program leaders and Board members to better understand the therapy and activity needs of the children and families enrolled in this grief counseling program. As a result of these conversations, GAI envisioned a 'Backyard Garden' environment that could be accomplished by reconfiguring a portion of the parking into a hardscape play area and an enlarged softscape play area. This was an effort to transform the site into a dynamic environment for individual and group activities for children of varying ages within an attractive, intimate setting using thoughtful, cost-effective interventions to the existing site.

Now almost complete, the new backyard includes areas for gathering, active recreation, exploratory play, and a contemplative Garden Walk for quiet time, conversation, and placement of small memorials created by the Children.

Working within a limited site, New Hope now has an outdoor space that will serve as an extension of the center's indoor activity space, creating a haven for kids who need it most.

GAI completed this work as pro-bono and offered services to New Hope in collaboration with New Hope and Ms. Pathak. Other partners included The Collage Companies contractor and Rep Services, who donated two colorful landscape structures. The project involved extensive coordination with the City of Maitland and was funded primarily by community partners and grants, including Dr. Phillips Charities. All are looking forward to Fall 2021 when New Hope will resume on-site/in-person activities and the kids can enjoy the new Backyard and Garden! 🌿

## Way To Go!!!

If you have a project where landscape architectural design services were provided pro bono, you can submit your Stewardship proposal to: [aschmok@landscapearchitect.com](mailto:aschmok@landscapearchitect.com).

Landscape Architect & Specifier News (ISSN 1060-9962) is published monthly by Landscape Communications, Inc., 14771 Plaza Drive Suite A, Tustin, California 92780 Phone: 714-979-LASN (5276); Fax: 714-434-3862. Online version (ISSN 2150-9123). Copyright 2021 by Landscape Communications, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Contents may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission. Periodicals postage paid at Tustin, CA and additional mailing offices. Subscription Inquiries: Send new or renewal notices or change of address (send both new and old addresses) to Landscape Architect & Specifier News, P.O. Box 1126, Tustin, CA 92781-1126. Subscriptions: Licensed/Registered Landscape Architects free of charge. Others, Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii & Canada: 12 issues, \$34.95, 24 issues, \$55.00, Mexico: 12 issues, \$65.00 per year. Additional copies may be purchased by contacting LASN at [circulation@landscapearchitect.com](mailto:circulation@landscapearchitect.com) or 714-979-5276 ext. 127. Postmaster: Please send address changes to Landscape Architect & Specifier News, P.O. Box 1126, Tustin, CA 92781-1126.