



Northwest FOCUS

God at Work Through Northwest Independent Church Extension

OCTOBER 2022

Playing For Ministry Purposes

When Rob and Ruth Morris were called to serve at Hobart Community Church, WA, one of his key goals was to intentionally help meet the needs of the local community as a means of outreach. So the church facilities have been available to different groups over the years, such as the Historical Society, County meetings, a voting location, a ladies quilting group, another church body, Alcoholics Anonymous, and piano recitals. For a number of years, the church also provided free meals once a week to over 100 people.

Five years ago, Pastor Rob caught a vision to replace the old, small playground equipment with a bigger system. While there are some children in the church family, he wanted this playground to be open to the community. Rob explained, *"There are no schools in Hobart, and no community playgrounds, so parents have no place nearby to take their kids to play outside."* So over the course of 4 months, with the help of volunteers, a new playground was constructed. Funds were raised by the church family, along with gifts from another church and a grant from the county. At the dedication of the playground in May 2017, King County Councilman, Reagan Dunn cut the ribbon.

Since that time, Pastor Rob says that this simple playground has been a wonderful source of outreach. *"Scarcely a day goes by when there are not children playing on it!"* A number of homeschooled families come on a weekly basis, as well as



other moms with little ones. One encounter that really touches his heart is of an older man who lives in a town ten minutes away. He is the sole caregiver for his 27 year old son who has severe autism. The two activities that help calm his son are swimming and swinging. With the onset of Covid, all parks and pools were closed, and Hobart's playground was the only place the father could find that would allow him to come. Pastor Rob stated, *"He came 3-4 times a week for an hour or so each time. His son would swing, and the dad would sit in his car. He comes a couple of times a month now. I have been able to go out and talk with the father a few times, and hope to continue building that relationship."*

Hobart families love the playground, too! Morgan, 5 exclaimed, *"I love the swings the best because I can feel the wind in my hair!"* Kiki, 3, added, *"I can go super-duper high on the swings!"* Her sister, Xanthe, 7, whispered that she likes the monkey rings best, and *"I like to pretend I'm a monkey!"*

HCC Elder and NICE Missionary, Bob Allen, added, *"This has been an effective means of reaching families in our community. I see it as a practical expression of Paul's attitude in I Corinthians 9:22, 23, 'I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.'"*

Playing for ministry purposes! Using any means to build relationships in order to share the Gospel. That is Rob and Ruth Morris' vision for the playground and the church building as a whole!

HCC Playground; Pastor Rob with Playground Sign; The dedication (Reagan Dunn is holding the scissors); Morgan swinging

So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. I Corinthians 3:7