

Case Study

DENNIS THE MENACE PARK IS RENOVATED TO MODERN STANDARDS WHILE HONORING ITS HISTORIC ROOTS



DENNIS THE MENACE PARK

Midland, Texas

THE BACKGROUND: Dennis the Menace Park first opened on July 11, 1959 in Midland, Texas. It was one of the first adventure playgrounds in the United States, providing unrestricted play opportunities to the children and families who visited. The original park was made possible by an anonymous and generous donation with a stipulation that there would be free admission

for the community. It was modeled after a park in the west coast that was based on the Dennis the Menace comic strip created by Hank Ketcham. Generations of locals and visitors made memories enjoying the historical equipment. The city updated the park once in 1993 before needing an update again in 2019 to include new inclusive play equipment.

THE CHALLENGE: Dennis the Menace Park has been around for 60 years and the community made many memories enjoying the original play equipment at this park. The challenge was to bring the park's playgrounds up to modern safety standards and refresh its look while honoring its many beloved memories.

"Dennis the Menace Park is very important to this community. Many kids in west Texas, not just Midland, but all over the Permian Basin grew up playing in this park. It has a lot of memories for a lot of people," Assistant Community Service Director Laurie Williams said. "There were a lot of challenges trying to preserve people's memories, holding on to some of the old while mixing it with something new, so we hope we've done that."

Dennis the Menace Park is the jewel of the Permian Basin. This is important because playgrounds are the corporate offices for children. It's where kids learn to play fair, be kind, share, respect others, and learn how to get along with other people. It's where the first life lessons about socializing are formed. This is by far the most important office space in the city of Midland. Thanks to you Midlanders, city staff, and city council, kids business is now open.

-Midland Councilman Love



DENNIS THE MENACE IN ACTION

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

THE SUPERIOR SOLUTION: The Dennis the Menace comic inspired themes for the playgrounds including baseball, western, tree house, and airplane themed structures. We incorporated custom Dennis the Menace graphics into each play structure that include characters from the comic including Dennis Mitchell and Mr. Wilson. The western town themed structure features custom facades including a Midland Inn, jail, and ACME Dry Goods Store. This theme is carried out with two horse spring riders and a stage coach playhouse. The treehouse structure is designed with two sides: a tree and a shack that are connected by an arch bridge and a net tunnel. The baseball theme structure features lots of custom themed elements including a Ketcham Field panel, stadium light toppers, base plate toppers, and a ball park facade.



The original airplane structure was saved as a monument in the park.

"All four playgrounds here at Dennis the Menace Park have their own unique theming, which ties back to the original cartoon in some way." Western Distribution Manager for Superior Recreational Products Josh Thayer said. "If I were to pick one unique feature it would be the airplane structure. Virtually everybody here has some story that relates back to the original airplane. The new airplane is probably the most single unique feature that we have."

What's more, the airplane structure is designed with a wide ramp throughout so children with and without mobility devices can play together. The entire park was created to include play equipment for children of all ages and abilities.



The new inclusive airplane structure designed with a wide ramp throughout.

RESULTS: Dennis the Menace Park was established 60 years ago. Many within the community grew up playing in this park, so revitalizing this park adds great value to Midland.

"This particular park is within walking distance to the most children in Midland, so it adds the most value to the most people in the city," Thayer said.

In addition to Midland residents, Dennis the Menace Park also attracts visitors.

"I am so, so proud that this park resides in District 2. When families from all over the Permian Basin come to shop in Midland, this will be an added enjoyable stop for them," Councilman Love said.

Hundreds within the Midland community showed their support and excitement at the May 2 ribbon cutting ceremony.

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[SEE DENNIS THE MENACE IN ACTION ▶](#)

BASEBALL THEME

SRPFX-50214



AIRPLANE THEME

SRPFX-50206



TREEHOUSE THEME

SRPFX-50221



WESTERN THEME

SRPFX-50074-R1





Custom Playgrounds that Reflect your Community

To find out more about how Superior can create a custom themed playground for your community, let's get in touch!

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