

Americus Uses Sales Tax Funds to Improve Ballfields

By Britney Hinrichs, Founder/President of Project Playscape and Americus City Councilmember

The residents of Americus, population 910, worked hard in 2018 to pass a half-cent sales tax dedicated to creating “recreation purposes for the betterment of the youth.” From 2019 through 2021, the sales tax funds were used to move forward with community’s efforts to build a new ballfield complex. The community has raised over \$450,000 through private fundraising, donations, and grants for the project. The sole city baseball field will soon see the addition of a new t-ball field, full-size baseball/softball field, renovated concessions and bathrooms, a new playground, fencing, and parking. The Americus Ballfield Complex is now under construction and will be gifted to the City of Americus in May 2022.

The ballfields are just one example of the community’s efforts to improve recreational opportunities in Americus. Project Playscape, a local non-profit, has worked to also start a fundraising effort, overlapping the ballfield project, to raise \$200,000 to build a splash pad. The splash pad will also be a future gift to the City of Americus. The new project will provide a splash pad, benches, canopy for shade and renovated bathrooms with new changing areas added. With any additional funds remaining, Project Playscape will also work to build a new outdoor basketball pad at the Americus City-Jones Park.



Project Playscape works to raise funds for larger projects that rural communities are unable to pay for, or would take decades of saving to achieve. Project Playscape was founded in 2010 with a mission of raising funds to improve and enhance facilities and programs centered on physical activity, recreation, and team building within the City of Americus and Lyon County, Kansas. All children and families benefit from Project Playscape in that it provides opportunities for play and recreation, which is especially critical for the physical and emotional development of children.



Example of Project Playscape's fundraising efforts from Americus' March Newsletter

Through Project Playscape, childhood obesity has decreased, and the emotional well-being of children and families is strengthened, as well as the sense of connection and community within Americus and Lyon County. Families consider Project Playscape to be especially critical during the summer months, when children are out of school and looking for something fun and safe to do. In doing so, Project Playscape provides a safe and supportive space, where all children can participate and thrive in, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, socioeconomic status, age and ability. Project Playscape brings together children and families who might otherwise not have connected. Whether it's through the installation of a new swing set or ballfield, all children and families can find a home and a fun and supportive place to play through Project Playscape. 🌞

🌞 **Britney Hinrichs** is the founder of Project Playscape and serves on the Americus City Council.

“Personally, I’m passionate about all the projects we take on, as they provide opportunities for kids and families that could take decades to accumulate through low city budgets in smaller rural communities,” said Hinrichs. “I’m a North Lyon County Alumni, and have raised my three kids here, knowing the impact these projects have on our family and the organizations it positively affects is worth it. The biggest thing — it’s for our kids and future generations. Memories will be made, stories will be told, knowing all of us — Project Playscape, the Americus City Council and our generous donors — had a part in our collective efforts.”



Location of the splash pad.



Rendering of the splash pad area.

Project Playscape's Splash Pad Project in Americus



Construction of ballfields underway.

