

# **THE KIDS DESIGN COUNCIL**

## **DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BRIEFLY:**

The Preserve at McCormick Park is a nature preserve in the City of Euless that was designed and created strictly by children. The Kids Design Council (KDC), consisting of 75 children of various ages in Euless schools, gave input about features they wanted in a park during after-school brainstorming sessions.

## **WHEN AND WHY WAS IT CREATED?**

The KDC was created because the intent of the Preserve was to be a hands-on, interactive learning environment. Staff members wanted to ensure it would have items that would really capture a child's attention. The KDC was able to analyze design of the Preserve from a play perspective, and initiate ideas that appealed to them, the target audience.

## **HOW HAS THE PROGRAM IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

In the middle of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Euless now has a pristine natural area that the city can protect and use as an educational tool. The preserve has 15 acres of open space, a half-mile hike-and-bike trail, a 110-foot boardwalk for strolling, a playground, two ponds, a fishing pier, a pavilion and five picnic tables with grills. The park also has a wetland, a bird habitat and an amphitheater-style outdoor classroom as well as a historic tree grove. This is an outdoor learning center, containing examples of different ecosystems such as wetlands and forest areas, which would take months to recreate in the classroom.

The KDC's ideas were implemented on nearly everything from types of benches, to how far people should have to walk to utilizing large rocks as signage in the park. Their ideas were contagious. Once one idea was given, four or five more were shouted out. The majority of the ideas were used, except for hosting a lion's cage and a Ferris wheel.

At the KDC's insistence, the majority of the park has remained natural and eco-friendly. Native grass and plants were established, signage was suggested with the names of plant life and benches were made from trees removed from the Preserve. Even at a young age, the KDC saw the need to treat it as a natural area and to protect what was already there.

### **WHY IS YOUR PROGRAM OUTSTANDING OR INNOVATIVE?**

This was an incredible learning experience for the KDC to see that parks just don't appear. There is a lot of planning and preparation that goes in to establishing a park. The Preserve has become an incredibly popular and well-regarded park due to the ideas and suggestions of the KDC.

The KDC's expertise and intuition was extremely helpful and accurate with the Preserve. They are directly responsible for the creation of new school curriculum, which will be used in the years to come. They will continue to flourish with the design and construction of new parks in Eules.