

## MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Children at Rivier's Early Childhood Center receive their dream playground

Jennifer J. Liskow'02G\*  
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Members of the Vogel family accept a quilt from Early Childhood Center teachers at the dedication ceremony for the George Reynik Memorial Playground.

(Photo by Jodie Andruskevich)

Former Amherst, N.H. residents Kyle and Kimberly Vogel and their family made a gift to Rivier's Early Childhood Center to build a new playground. The state-of-the-art George Reynik Memorial Playground is named for Kimberly Vogel's father, who died in 2005.

The Vogel family attended a dedication ceremony on October 27, 2006. Rivier President Dr. William Farrell thanked Mrs. Vogel for her gift, part of Rivier's first-ever capital campaign, *Designing the Future: The Campaign for Rivier College*. "We're grateful to the Vogel family for their contribution, which made this playground possible," says Dr. Farrell. ECC teachers presented the Vogel family

with a photograph of Mr. Reynik at the Center with his grandchildren, as well as a quilt the children and teachers made.

At the dedication ceremony, Vogel said, "My father gave me my first computer, a quest for knowledge, and an empathy for other people." The contribution to the playground was a way to honor her father and show her appreciation to the Early Childhood Center, where her children spent several years. "The first time my father saw the ECC, he was impressed—it is so warm and loving and child-focused," said Vogel. She said that while her family typically keeps their philanthropic gifts anonymous, they wished to bring attention to the importance of Rivier's Early Childhood Center to working parents in the greater Nashua community.

Vogel's love of computers and technology earned her a job at Google's Mountain View, Cal. headquarters in 1999. As one of the company's first 20 employees, she was part of a core management team that formed and guided the company's public relations, marketing and sales departments. In 2002, she left the company and moved to Amherst, N.H. so she and her husband Kyle could be closer to family and spend more time with their children.

The old ECC playground was in need of repair and updating. While the College planned to replace the playground, the Vogel gift helped fast-track its design, development and completion.

Teachers at the ECC chose the equipment for the new playground. "Teachers described how different equipment would benefit each age group; there was a tremendous amount of thought involved," says Director Rose Francouer. Children also influenced the design through drawings and descriptions of their dream playgrounds.



The Reynik Memorial Playground is an important improvement to the Center. It includes swings and slides of different heights, a rock-climbing wall, a large sail shade to provide shelter from the sun, crawling tunnels, a zipline, which helps develop overall body strength, and a paved race track for bicycles. It also includes a specially designed toddler area with bucket swings, a sand box and a climbing structure specifically for 2-3 year olds, and meditative labyrinth.

“The teachers at the ECC are wonderful people and a terrific resource—they helped us become better parents,” said Vogel. “If you’re open to listening to what the teachers say, you can learn a lot about parenting and your children. This place is a gem—there aren’t many like it in the country,” she says. ■

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\* **JENNIFER LISKOW** works as a Public Relations and Web Writer in the Office of Marketing and Communications and teaches in Rivier’s Professional Communications program. Jenn earned her bachelor’s in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master’s in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features, and essays published. In her free time, Jenn enjoys practicing yoga, ten-pin bowling, and listening to live music with her husband, Tim.