Variety Heritage Adventure Park

The Forks National Historic Site
Winnipeg, Manitoba



variety
the children's charity

2-1313 Border Street | Winnipeg, MB | R3H 0X4

Who We Are

Our Mission

Variety, the Children's Charity is dedicated to raising funds that enable us to meet the needs of children of all abilities in Manitoba.

Our Vision

To be recognized throughout Manitoba as an organization that makes a meaningful and genuine contribution to the lives of children.





About the Variety Heritage Adventure Park

The ***Variety Heritage Adventure Park*** (VHAP) officially opened to the public on June 27, 2012. It is a world-class, **accessible** park that takes children on an historic adventure through The Forks. The VHAP provides enjoyable, rewarding and memorable recreational and educational opportunities for visitors. It features a variety of unique, interactive play structures, water feature, and natural landscaping flow. It also includes a small outdoor performance area for interpretive programs and presentations, giving priority to the historic stories that happened play here play an important educational role for families and school groups. As the young and the "young at heart" experience the park, they can imagine being part of a vibrant meeting place among First Nations.

The VHAP is **free** to the public and open year-round. Over 200,000 children of all ages and abilities have enjoyed the park since opening.

This award-winning park has been recognized with The City of Winnipeg's Accessibility Award in 2012; Variety received The Chamber of Commerce Spirit of Winnipeg Award for innovation in the Charities category 2013; Parks Canada CEO Awards of Excellence for extraordinary contribution as engaging partners 2013; and the 2013 Interpretation Canada Gold Award of Excellence.



Aerial Photograph of the Variety Heritage Adventure Park – July 2012

Variety, the Children's Charity, is a community based charitable organization, dedicated to meeting the tangible needs of children of all abilities and helping them to realize their full potential. The collaboration between Parks Canada and Variety demonstrates the shared goal of the two organizations to provide enriching learning experiences for all children. This partnership is unique as it is the first time Parks Canada has ever partnered with a charity anywhere in Canada.

The Need

With over 4 million visitors each year, The Forks is truly the city's premier, historical, tourist attraction. Now, the Variety Heritage Adventure Park has filled a gap at The Forks and attracts thousands of Winnipeg families and tourists with young children along with hundreds of elementary age school groups and daycares. The Variety Heritage Adventure Park enhances the overall Forks experience and is yet another world-class attraction for people to enjoy during their visit to The Forks and Winnipeg.

The Benefits

The Variety Heritage Adventure Park (VHAP) provides enjoyable, rewarding and memorable recreational and educational opportunities for all children and caregivers. At the VHAP, children from all cultural, socio and economic backgrounds as well as children with disabilities play as equals and without barriers. Special consideration was given to children with physical and visual disabilities so they too could have a safe, enjoyable place to play. The whole park has been covered with a colorful, rubberized surface, and special touch and color schemes have been incorporated for children with visual impairments.

The playground was designed in such a way as to be of interest and engaging to both the active participants and those who are passively attending such as caregivers. The VHAP will entice repeat use in all seasons and at varying times of the day and evening.

Testaments of Success

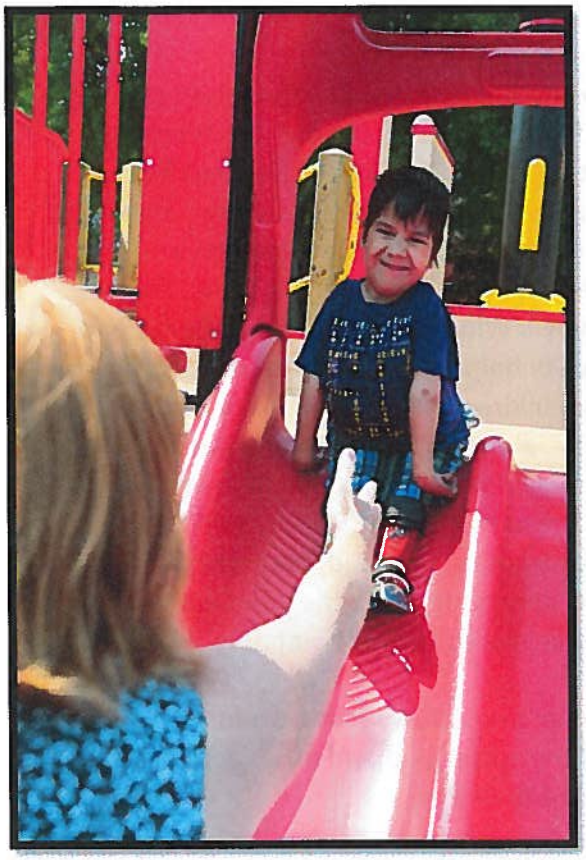
The comments we have received from participants say it best:

"I love the park just built! This is awesome. I'm amazed at all the thought, artificial artifacts and facts put into it for our future generations to learn and enjoy. Thank you!" *signed-One Happy Parent.*

"LOVED the Adventure Park. It was fully accessible to our family with 3 children with cerebral palsy and visual impairments. Never seen anything like it before :)"

"Truly a wonderful experience for children of all ages. Loved everything about it. Everyone who is responsible for this wonderful park should be very proud of such an accomplishment. Thanks so much to all of you."

There is nothing more rewarding that seeing the expressions of joy and excitement as children of all abilities play together in the park.



Tears of joy ran down his mother's face as Lucas played in the new Park. He slid down the slide and especially loved the splash pad. Having the time of his life with the other children, he moved freely about as he motored around in his wheelchair. For the first time ever, Lucas did not feel "different" nor was he excluded from the simple activity of enjoying a splash pad with his friends and brother. It was a special moment for all.

Variety is proud to provide freedom opportunities for children with special needs to help them live life to its fullest.

(Above: Lucas loving his freedom on the slide!)

(Below: Exploring the Countess of Dufferin)



Last years' city budget recommended no costs to city pools, arenas / community clubs for water or splash pads that help provide a better quality of life to children throughout Winnipeg. These splash pads that were exempt were Dakota and St. Norbert. The Variety Heritage Park (VHAP) has attracted over 200,000 kids to use the splash pads with a lot of the children attending from the downtown and core area. This includes numerous schools, daycares and other organizations dealing with special needs students. Variety wants to continue to provide an opportunity for children with disabilities to be able to enjoy a Winnipeg Summer and be able to **participate** with everyone. This world class accessible facility helps Variety to provide that need. We want to continue more programming at the VHAP for children with all abilities and continue to nurture their development by providing programs and special needs care that have a direct impact. With the water cost of using the splash pad, this is becoming more difficult to insure we give each child a childhood and the experience of being outdoors. The activities that Variety and Parks Canada provide at the Forks National Historic Site - especially the splash pad; puts more smiles on kids' faces and they can continue to grow and not only do they re-discover the unique joy of being a kid, but also gain the benefit of interacting with and feeling accepted by their peers.

I come before EPC today and ask you to consider VHAP as an essentiality to our community. Please forgo the water bills and help us insure the enjoyment of the splash pad and other activities by all Winnipeg children and families at the Variety Heritage Adventure Park.

