

## **Nature Playground at Assiniboine Park Will Reopen Friday Morning After Being Temporarily Closed for Improvements**

**For immediate release:** Winnipeg, June 20, 2024 – The Nature Playground at Assiniboine Park will reopen tomorrow (Friday, June 21) at 10:30 a.m. after being temporarily closed for improvements since late April.

“With summer here, we are thrilled to reopen the Nature Playground and invite Park visitors back into this beloved gathering place,” said Ray Karasevich, President & CEO, Assiniboine Park Conservancy.

The Nature Playground, located adjacent to the Assiniboine Park Pavilion, was one of the first projects completed in the historical redevelopment of the Park and Zoo that got underway in 2009. Since it opened in 2011, it has been a very popular gathering place for children and families, but after 13 years, it was time for a refresh.

Work completed during the temporary closure includes:

- installation of a new wheelchair accessible swing,
- re-surfacing of rubberized pathways and play features,
- a new wheelchair accessible willow tree tunnel near the existing picnic shelter,
- spring planting and groundskeeping, plus
- painting and repairs to other playground features, infrastructure and amenities.

The new wheelchair accessible swing features a spacious entry deck and ramp for easy roll-on access and offers plenty of room for caregivers or other children to join in on the fun and enjoy a ride. Handlebars that lower easily into place help move the swing, so users can actively contribute to the motion. Unlike some other models, this user-friendly swing does not require an attendant for supervised operation. Installation of the wheelchair swing was made possible with support from The Winnipeg Foundation.

The refresh of the Nature Playground also includes a wonderful new piece of public art installed late last fall. The DO RE MI FA SOL LA SI sculpture, created by Canadian artist Joe Fafard, is a combination of scenes, objects, and fragments that form the shape of seven running horses. Fafard used laser-cut steel off-cuts saved from his previous works to create the herd now on display in the Streuber Family Children’s Garden area of the Nature Playground. Larger sets of the same sculpture can be found in Calgary and Quebec City. The sculpture’s installation was made possible through a donation by Michael Nesbitt, a philanthropist whose generosity has benefited numerous arts organizations across Manitoba.

“The opening of the Nature Playground in 2011 was made possible with support from the City of Winnipeg and private donors,” said Karasevich. “Thanks to their leadership and generosity, the Nature Playground has brought joy to thousands of children and families over the years and will continue to delight Park visitors for many years to come.”

After Friday's reopening, the Nature Playground will resume regular hours of operation and be open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Planning is also underway to complete accessibility improvements to the existing washroom facility in the Nature Playground. That project is expected to get underway this fall and will not require an additional playground closure.

### **About Joe Fafard**

Nationally and internationally acclaimed artist Joe Fafard (1942-2019) was one of Canada's leading professional visual artists. Born in the small agricultural community of Ste. Marthe, Saskatchewan, Fafard had deep prairie roots, and attended the University of Manitoba (BFA 1966) here in Winnipeg. To learn more about Joe Fafard, visit [joefafard.com](http://joefafard.com).

### **For interviews and information requests, please contact:**

Laura Cabak, Director, Public Relations & Communications  
Assiniboine Park Conservancy  
Cell: 204-795-0091, Email: [lcabak@assiniboinepark.ca](mailto:lcabak@assiniboinepark.ca)