



## NEWS RELEASE

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### City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department Receives GOCO Grant for New Playspace at Kullerstrand Elementary School

**WHEAT RIDGE, Colo. April 6, 2020** –The City of Wheat Ridge was recently awarded a \$110,000 grant by the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board to redesign and build a new nature-inspired playspace at Kullerstrand Elementary School. Kullerstrand is one of five Colorado schools awarded a total of \$517,885 to help build new playgrounds and outdoor spaces.

“A member of the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department staff, Brandon Altenburg, worked in collaboration with the staff at Kullerstrand Elementary to craft the grant application,” stated Karen O’Donnell, director of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation. “We are very proud to have been a recipient of this grant and of the Kullerstrand students who brought the idea to City Council. Students presented the plan at a City Council meeting last fall and received their full support to move forward on the project and to seek the funding through this GOCO grant,” O’Donnell continued.

Kullerstrand Elementary will redesign its outdated playground into a nature-inspired playspace that includes an ADA-accessible swinging bay, a sensory dome, climbing features, and enhanced play equipment for children of all ages and abilities. Additional shade structures, including trees and hedges, are included in the design, as are new bike racks, tables, and trash receptacles. Log benches and picnic tables will be installed adjacent to the playground to facilitate outdoor learning opportunities and to support Kullerstrand’s robust enrichment programs. Three new basketball hoops will also be installed to replace the school’s old metal hoops, and the four square and hopscotch areas will be repainted.

The five funded projects, which were selected from a pool of 17 applications, will impact more than 2,500 students and leverage more than \$769,000 in local matching funds. Trends among selected projects include improved access, especially for those with mobility issues; recreation opportunities for older students; emphasis on mental and emotional wellbeing; and strong student engagement during the planning process.

The grants are part of GOCO’s [School Yard Initiative \(SYI\)](#). Schools apply in partnership with their local governments for funding to build outdoor spaces where kids enjoy unstructured play and outdoor learning. All school yards must be designed, in part, by students. Funded elementary schools are also eligible to become part of Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s [Schools and Outdoor Learning Environment \(SOLE\)](#) program that provides field trips, family nature nights, and outdoor education training for teachers.

**Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)** invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state’s parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO’s independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts, and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created when voters approved a Constitutional Amendment in 1992, GOCO has since funded more than 5,200 projects in urban and rural areas in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support. Visit [GOCO.org](http://GOCO.org) for more information.

The **City of Wheat Ridge**, located west of Denver with a population of 31,000 residents, is home to a mix of retail/commercial businesses and unique residential neighborhoods. Wheat Ridge is a vibrant community in a prime location, providing easy access to the Denver metro area and to recreation west into the mountains. The City was recently ranked Top Smallest City by the Economic Development Council of Colorado. Info about Wheat Ridge [ci.wheatridge.co.us](http://ci.wheatridge.co.us)

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