



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / August 30, 2024**

### **The Mariners' Awarded Rotary District Grant for Discovery Project**

**NEWPORT NEWS, Va**—The Mariners' Museum and Park has been awarded a Rotary Foundation District Grant of \$24,750. The grant will provide upgrades to create a welcoming outdoor space for children ages two through five in Mariners' Park. The Discovery Project reflects The Mariners' commitment to the school-aged child and efforts to promote a new generation of environmental stewards.

"Funding will allow The Mariners' to complete vital renovations to improve the Lil Mariners' Play Zone, create our first designated early childhood education program location, and encourage children of all abilities to engage in nature through play," said Grant Writer Josi Washington. "This generous funding was made possible by the leading effort of the Rotary Club of Oyster Point who, along with five local clubs, came together to secure support for the Discovery Project."

Along with improvements to Lil' Mariners' Play Zone, the project also includes upgrades to the current Bumblebee Learning Garden and installation of a new outdoor learning space with modular seating. These enhancements will allow Museum educators to host interactive programs in a nature-based setting and provide an immersive experience for exploring native flowers, pollinators, and Park animals. Rotary Club members will be assisting with physical improvements during the project.

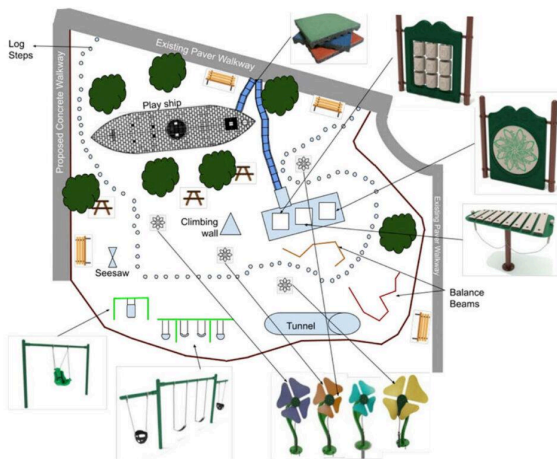
"It is inspiring to be a part of projects like this, where dedicated members of our community have committed their time, talents, and resources to come alongside us to serve others and meet a need," expressed Washington. "This project represents a significant investment that will expand access to free nature-based enrichment and impact our community's youngest learners for years to come."

For interview requests or more information about The Mariners' Museum and Park, media should contact Senior Director of Advancement Sabrina Jones at [sjones@MarinersMuseum.org](mailto:sjones@MarinersMuseum.org) or (757) 591-7708.

**Location for an outdoor classroom:**



**Conceptual idea of upgrades to The Lil' Mariners' Play Zone:**



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**About Rotary**

Rotary unites a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges and creating lasting change. Rotary connects 1.4 million people of action from more than 46,000 Rotary clubs in almost every country in the world. Their service improves lives both locally and internationally, from helping those in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. For more information, visit [Rotary.org](http://Rotary.org).

**About Rotary Club of Oyster Point**

Rotarians are People of Action who put Service Above Self. The Club hosts, funds, and participates in projects that benefit the local and global community and that align with the Rotary's Guiding Principles. Since the Club's charter in 1984, emphasis is placed on projects that benefit the lives of children. To learn more, visit <https://oysterpointrotary.com>.

## **About The Mariners' Museum and Park**

The Mariners' Museum and Park connects people to the world's waters because through the water – through our shared maritime heritage – we are connected to one another. The organization is an educational, private 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and preserves and interprets maritime history through an international collection of ship models, figureheads, paintings, and other maritime artifacts. The Mariners' Museum is home to the *USS Monitor* Center, and is surrounded by the 550-acre Mariners' Park, the largest privately owned and maintained park that is free and open to the public in North America. The Mariners' Museum Library is the largest maritime library in the Western hemisphere. Because of the Museum's world-class collection and its reputation for high-level exhibits and programs, in 1998, the U.S. Congress designated The Mariners' Museum as one of only two maritime museums that comprise America's National Maritime Museum. The Museum galleries are open to the general public with \$1 admission, and the Mariners' team will continue to offer FREE virtual programs for those who prefer to engage online with us or through our social media platforms and blog posts. The Mariners' Park and Noland Trail is open for daily use. For additional information, visit [MarinersMuseum.org](http://MarinersMuseum.org), call (757) 596-2222 or write to The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606.

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