

KaBOOM! helps with cleanup efforts

Bronstein Apartments to get new playgroup equipment from Home Depot Foundation

By **PATRICK MEIGHAN**
Staff Writer

NASHUA – The first step was the cleanup last spring.

The process begun then will be completed next week, when new playground equipment is installed at Bronstein Apartments on Central Street.

The playground is funded through a \$61,000 grant from The Home Depot Foundation along with a \$10,500 contribution from the Nashua Housing Authority, which owns and manages the public housing complex.

A national nonprofit organization called KaBOOM! is coordinating the project. KaBOOM! works with communities and businesses to build safe play spaces for children.

Two Bronstein residents have assisted by helping to write the grant or working with the housing authority to organize the volunteers.

The playground installation will take place Thursday beginning at 8:30 a.m. and concluding by 3 p.m.

“The housing authority is really excited about the opportunity to build a positive play space for the children of Bronstein Apartments to use,” said Sarah R. Gagnon, public housing program

manager with the housing authority.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to bring the community together through this project,” Gagnon said.

The housing authority applied to KaBOOM! for playground equipment for Bronstein Apartments four years ago, but a different site was selected, Gagnon said.

For this application, resident Maria DeLeon worked with the housing authority in writing the grant request, Gagnon said.

DeLeon has championed efforts to clean up the play area in the apartments.

The playground had been in bad shape for years, which led to her campaign, said DeLeon, who grew up in the apartment complex and now lives there with her young children.

Cats had used the sand as a litter box, and skunks and opossums could be seen at night swilling through the trash. Trash included beer bottles and cigar blunts for smoking marijuana, as well as used diapers from the overflow of a nearby trash bin, DeLeon said.

Through her efforts, the entire grounds of the downtown public housing complex got a huge makeover, with residents working side by side with Nashua Housing Authority staff and volunteers from a Comcast volunteer day project.

Comcast brought 100 T-shirts and about 30 to 40 volunteers. Every shirt was claimed by a worker, including 30 housing authority staff and their families and as many Bronstein residents.

At least 20 additional volunteers and residents not donning the blue shirts also helped out with the cleanup.

For the playground installation, Bronstein resident Andrea Bynoe and her children have helped to organize volunteers and solicit donations of water and refreshments.

Ten housing authority staff members are expected to participate along with about 75 local volunteers – more than half of them Bronstein residents. Also helping will be volunteers from Southern New Hampshire Services, the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua, the city’s Urban Programs department and the Nashua Police Athletic League.

Home Depot also will contribute an additional 150 volunteers, Gagnon said.

KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in Chicago, and San Mateo, Calif.

For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.

Patrick Meighan can be reached at 594-6518 or pmeighan@nashuatelegraph.com.

