

Atonement Lutheran Church in Green Bay dedicated its **"Hope for All"** park on July 30 to provide a safe place for families to gather and children to play. The park's name tells it all.

Hope for All Park, near the church at 2132 Deckner Ave., is the result of collaboration between the church and the community. It came together through a \$5,000 grant from the Lutheran Church's East Central Synod of Wisconsin and playground equipment was donated by the St. Vincent Hospital daycare center and installed by the Green Bay Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.

Taking part in the dedication were Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt, Steve Maricque of the American Red Cross, Green Bay parks department representatives Bill Landvatter and Dan Ditschiet, Atonement Lutheran Church Pastor James Gerth and Jiro Huilar, a member of the Atonement Lutheran Church Hispanic Ministry.

"It is good that we do these kinds of things together with the city to provide places where children and families can gather in safety and enjoyment," Schmitt said. "It is now our responsibility. It will be very important that we work together as a community to maintain this park so that not only the children of today, but the children of tomorrow can enjoy it."

About 90 people attended the event. The ceremony included a multilingual prayer to dedicate the park, led by Gerth and Huilar.

Gerth said the park is only one of many ongoing projects that his church has taken on to become more active in the community. Other examples are an upcoming community craft sale, a block party later in the month, a live nativity in December and an annual bike rodeo in the spring to encourage safety in bicycle riding.

The new park offers slides, climbing equipment and swings.

Gerth said Atonement Lutheran Church is concerned about its neighborhood, and that the playground now provides a nearby place for families to safely play together in a busy area across from Preble High School and the American Red Cross — where no playground was previously available.

Gerth said the dedication ceremony included a thank-you to all who made the park and playground possible.

"This is a park, as its namesake says, for all," Gerth said. "The name is Hope for All."



Micqelina Santiago of Green Bay watches as Lilia goes down the slide during the "Hope for All" park and playground dedication at Atonement Lutheran Church on July 30 in Green Bay. (Matthew L. Becker.)