

## Local Schools



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# Oak Grove's Playground Dedicated to Former Student

MARCH 27TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - "Promise me you'll always remember – you're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think."

The students of Oak Grove Elementary School will know this Christopher Robin quote by heart since it is now placed on a mounted plaque for all of the students to see when they are playing at recess. The new playground at the elementary school will be officially open for use tomorrow on Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

This new place of freedom and fun for the younger students has been created in the memory of Ally Daughhete, who was a second grade student who passed away in 2011. Her untimely passing has affected the community and they have made a special memorial at the new playground so she can be honored by the school, classmates, and other members of the community.

Ally's father, Ronnie Daughhete, has lived in Poplar Bluff for the majority of his life and he knew of the needs within the community for a new playground and new playground equipment. This new memorial includes \$24,000 worth of new equipment, including a jungle gym. There have also been new pieces added to the old playground back behind the school so that recess can be assorted by grade level. The fundraisers held by the local PTO, proceeds from the Latchkey program, and the donation of Ronnie and his wife Melissa made the dream turn into a reality.

"The Daughhete family continues to be active in the school and community," Jenifer Richardson, current Oak Grove Principal, said. "They have blessed Oak Grove with a gift that was truly representative of Ally's character. We are very appreciative of their generosity."

The Daughhetees were contacted during the fundraising and have strived to keep Ally's memory alive and well. They have added several stand-alone components to the recent project and will continue to do so. The playground was built in honor of Ally and her playful nature so that the students and local kids in the community will be active and playful as well while remembering their friend.

“She was a ‘sun up, sun down’ kind of girl,” her father, Ronnie, explained. “She played outside all day and lived every moment to the fullest.”

The students and faculty are ecstatic about the opening of the much needed playground. The plaque, equipment, and memory of Ally will always be honored at Oak Grove in remembrance of her.

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