

Kansas City Community Creates Unique Playscape on Unused Lot

KEM STUDIO and Volunteer Team Complete Phase Two

KANSAS CITY, MO. – November 20, 2013 – KEM STUDIO, a design firm fusing architecture and industrial design, is leading the way to expand the [Académie Lafayette](#) playground. This unique playground is a resource for the kindergarten through second grade students at the charter school, as well as children in the urban community around the school.

Phase Two of the [Cherry Street Campus playground](#) adds a 20' wide slide/tunnel/climbing structure. This is in addition to the existing swings, climbing walls, 50' long standing height sand table (for five to eight year olds) and a tire balance beam that was built entirely by volunteers last summer. The slide structure was fabricated pro bono by

[A. Zahner Company](#), an internationally acclaimed engineering and fabrication company best known for the use of metal in the world of art and architecture, and was installed by [Centric Projects](#).

[KEM STUDIO](#) developed the design for the playground pro bono and created forms that could be built entirely by volunteers, incorporating found and recycled objects along with donated materials. Timber framing was designed to be made in small repeatable modules and then assembled on the concrete footings. The success of this project is especially meaningful to Jonathon Kemnitzer, a principal at KEM STUDIO, because his two children attend the school.

“We wanted to do something to give back to the school and community,” explains Kemnitzer. “The limited budget gave us an opportunity to design custom forms that could be built by parents, but more important reinforce the collaborative way kids play. The big idea was to encourage imagination and creative group play through the design, scale and proximity of the forms. In the completion of Phase Two, we saw a continued outpouring of support from parents, teachers and neighborhood group volunteers, and were particularly excited that Zahner was willing to fabricate the slide structure at a reduced cost. It’s been rewarding to see all of these amazing companies and people come together for the school, kids and the community.”

Zahner Engineering Director, Paul Martin, adds, “Zahner was very pleased to be part of a project that



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provides design excellence to a community that otherwise would not have exposure to it in such a direct fashion. We believe the power of great design and the effect it can have on those that experience it. It's satisfying to know that we played a role in something that will bring happiness and inspiration to children for many, many years."

Donations and grants totaling over \$45,000 were raised in the last 20 months from parent and school fundraisers, neighborhood organizations, a crowd funding platform for civic projects (Neighbor.ly), and organizations like KC CAN and the Oppenstein Brothers Foundation. In-kind materials were donated including EverGrain Envision composite deck boards by TAMKO Building Products, and professional services from Structural Engineering Associates. In addition, many hours of parent, teacher and administrator volunteer hours were donated to complete the unique Cherry Street playground. Photos of the playground can be viewed at: <http://www.kemstudio.com/project/academie-lafayette-longan-playground/>

About KEM STUDIO

KEM STUDIO is an award-winning design firm that fuses architecture + industrial design. This fusion is a natural extension of their underlying design philosophy – Better Design Better Living™ – making design more approachable, livable and necessary in our lives. KEM STUDIO works with a variety of clients on diverse projects. These include residential, commercial, and cultural architecture projects with public and private entities, as well as industrial design projects with companies such as Adobe, Landscape Forms, and Loftwall. The firm has received numerous awards across multiple disciplines, including AIA awards, IDEA awards, Interior Design Magazine's Best of Year Awards, GOOD DESIGN AWARDS, and Best of NeoCon Silver. KEM STUDIO is based in Kansas City, MO.

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