



# Every child deserves a safe place to play, thrive and make friends

## What is Jonnie and Friends Reach for the Stars?

Jonnie and Friends is a fundraising effort to restore the Universal Universe playground in Sacramento's Southside Park. Replacing worn equipment with new inclusive play structures and adding new programs and activities will allow kids of all abilities to play together, make friends and reach for the stars.

## What is Universal Universe?

Opened in 2005, Universal Universe was one of Northern California's first fully accessible playgrounds. With all-inclusive play structures, padded surfaces, access ramps and handrails, kids of all abilities and their parents were able to enjoy safe and fun-filled play days. The playground's space-themed rides and solar system artwork provided a bright, happy, and magical area for kids of all abilities to feel included.

Today, the playground continues to provide a fun place to play, yet with years of constant use, it now requires upkeep and repair. It needs the same community spirit and commitment that originally built the playground. It needs "Jonnie and Friends Reach for the Stars - A Fundraising Effort to Restore Universal Universe's All Access Playground."

## Fundraising Projects

Jonnie and Friends will focus on a multi-tiered fundraising effort. Once our first goal is reached, we will continue to fund playground projects that provide kids an inclusive place to play, learn and grow. In partnership with the City of Sacramento, our fundraising efforts will help enhance future renovations of the playground.

### Goal #1: New We-Go-Round

Every playground needs a merry-go-round! Universal Universe's original merry-go-round is broken and was never accessible to wheelchairs. Our #1 fundraising goal is to purchase a We-Go-Round, a fully accessible ride designed with fun and safety in mind. We plan to install the We-Go-Round in Spring 2021. Help us meet our goal!

\$29,000



[JonniesDreamPlayground.com](http://JonniesDreamPlayground.com)

A Fundraising Effort to Restore Universal Universe's All Access Playground

## Future Projects of Jonnie and Friends

- ★ Funding music and educational programs that unite children of all abilities.
- ★ Garnering community and volunteer support to assist the city in maintaining the grounds.
- ★ Adding innovative full-access structures to aid in balance, sensory and cognitive growth.
- ★ Developing trainings and workshops in partnership with local schools to support integrated play.

**“Every child, regardless of their abilities, deserves to have a fun and safe place to play. Universal Universe gave my son and his friends exactly that,” said Marc Laver. “Jonnie always looked up to the stars and now I’m sure he’s looking down with a smile on his face, happy to see that we are restoring this great park for a whole new generation of kids to enjoy.”**

## Who is Jonnie?

Jonnie and Friends Reach for the Stars is a tribute to Jonnie Laver. As a young child, Jonnie loved the outdoors and playing with friends. After complications from meningitis, Jonnie became reliant on a wheelchair for mobility and his family devoted their time to finding opportunities for Jonnie to play and thrive. They became advocates for adding accessible play features in new playgrounds, and in 2005, Jonnie and his family helped the City of Sacramento dedicate Southside Park’s Universal Universe playground. Over the next 13 years, Jonnie spent countless hours enjoying the playground and the Laver family saw firsthand the benefits of inclusive play for kids. They also saw the wear and tear that years of usage had on Jonnie’s favorite playground. Following Jonnie’s passing in 2019, the Laver family set the wheels in motion to help restore Universal Universe’s playground to its previous glory by launching Jonnie and Friends Reach for the Stars.

## Why Support Jonnie and Friends

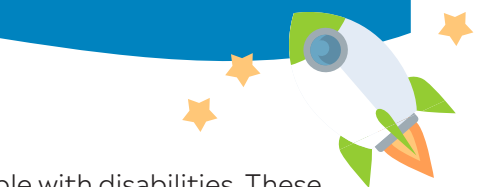
In the City of Sacramento alone, there are a total of 11,611 children and young people with disabilities. These children all benefit from having a fully accessible, maintained park where they can play, dream, and meet new friends. As a community member, your support through funding and volunteer efforts can ensure that Universal Universe, a playground for all, continues to be a place where kids of all abilities can thrive and reach for the stars.

## How to Support Jonnie and Friends

Please help us meet our first goal of providing a fully accessible We-Go-Round at the Universal Universe playground. Give kids of all abilities the joy of being included. Your support, of any kind, can help Jonnie and Friends reach their goal of ensuring no child, regardless of their ability, is left out of the fun.

Donate today, in any amount, to our partner **Gifts to Share, Inc.**, a 501 c3 nonprofit, by following the instructions below:

1. Visit: [giftstoshareinc.org](http://giftstoshareinc.org)
2. Click **Donate Now** then **Make a Donation**.
3. Be Sure to designate your donation by scrolling down and selecting: **We Go Round at Southside Park**
4. All donations are **tax deductible** and much appreciated!



## Jonnie *and* Friends Reach for the Stars

A Fundraising Effort to Restore  
Universal Universe’s All Access Playground

[JonniesDreamPlayground.com](http://JonniesDreamPlayground.com)



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