



Casey Tridico's legacy is happiness and laughter. And recently, the Grapevine playground built in her honor — Casey suffered from spinal muscular atrophy and died at the age of 7 in 1995 — received a major makeover. Casey's parents, Debra and Louis Tridico, originally raised money to build an accessible playground as a way to honor their daughter's memory. Like many ill or mobility-impaired kids, Casey's ability to enjoy traditional playgrounds was limited; the Tridicos wanted to see that change. Thanks to the continued support of the couple along with a dedicated Grapevine parks and recreation department, Casey's Clubhouse now not only includes a real clubhouse but incredible playground amenities, including a wheelchair-accessible treehouse with electronic games and 14-foot slide, a zip line and more. The playground is a visual wonderland, too, thanks to custom designs by Dallas' la terra studio, a landscape architecture and park-planning firm, and Cre8Play, a design/build studio in Minnesota. Nothing here says "handicapped," says Kevin Mitchell, assistant parks director. "It will appeal to everyone." The city invited kids of all abilities to give it a test run last month. "One mother told me she normally has to say no to her handicapped child when they go to a playground. This time she didn't."

The official grand opening of Casey's Clubhouse is 9 a.m. Sept. 7; Dove Park, 1509 Hood Lane.

*Photo by Ralph Lauer*