



Audubon Nature Institute  
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<http://audubonnatureinstitute.org>

## **Drew and Brittany Brees Donate New Audubon Park Playground**

### **Inclusive playground welcomes families of all abilities**

Thanks to a generous donation from Saints star quarterback Drew Brees and wife Brittany, Audubon Park visitors can now enjoy a pioneering playground that offers inclusive recreational opportunities for children—and adults—of all abilities.

The new Walnut Street Playground, located at the front of Audubon Park near St. Charles Avenue, promotes interactive physical, cognitive, visual and hearing experiences for all.

The unique design offers a welcoming environment for children with mobility challenges, including playground equipment accessible for people who use wheelchairs. In addition, the design presents a variety of features that provide sensory engagement and promote the development of motor skills.

The playground also creates opportunities for children who don't face these kinds of challenges to connect with peers of different backgrounds and abilities—an experience that experts say can foster empathy along with social and emotional skills that can last a lifetime.

There are benefits for adults, too. For parents and grandparents who face mobility challenges, the new playground is built to encourage cross-generational play, a key to building strong family ties.

“We offer our heartfelt thanks to Drew Brees and his family for helping **bring this visionary** playground experience to Audubon Park,” said Ron Forman, President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.

“After coming to New Orleans in the dark days after Hurricane Katrina, Drew and Brittany **embraced our community, raised their family here and made it their home. Drew Brees has shown time and again that he is much more than the leader of our beloved Saints. With the**

Brees family's commitment to this project and the accessibility and inclusivity it brings to **Audubon Park, Drew has proven it once again.**"

A plaque on the site dedicates the playground to the Brees' four children—**sons Baylen, Bowen, and Callen, and daughter Rylen—as well as the children of New Orleans.**

"Brittany and I are honored to bring this playground to Audubon Park," said Drew Brees. "As **the first fully inclusive playground of its kind in New Orleans, we wanted to create an experience where people of all ages and abilities can play side by side. We hope families will enjoy this play environment for years to come.**"

**Examples of the inclusive playground features are wheelchair-accessible areas, including a bongo drum panel that allows children to have fun with rhythm and tone, a Braille and Clock Panel, a Periscope Reach, a Ring-a-Bell Reach and a bridge with guardrails. The largest playground feature is the "ZipKrooz," a two-way ride similar to a zip line, which includes a track with a bucket seat for children with limited core strength.**

Designed by playground experts at the local company Dyna-Play, the playground also has conventional attractions such as slides, parallel bars, a balance beam, boogie board and tightrope bridge.

In addition to the new playground, the nearby Walnut Street Shelter has undergone a full renovation, including handicap-accessible paths, new restrooms, a roof replacement and landscaping improvements that include several 670-gallon oak trees and irrigation upgrades.

The shelter was restored through the generosity of the Montgomery family. A plaque on the building honors Anne and George Montgomery, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Click here for press release, images and video:

<http://newsroom.audubonnatureinstitute.org/drew-and-brittany-brees--donate-new-audubon-park-playground>

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