

More Beautiful Than Ever

My husband was in bed last night waiting for me to come up because I was putting some finishing touches on my daughter's school fundraiser and picture forms when we both heard a bunch of sirens. We live pretty close to the fire station, so we didn't think much of it, even if it was odd that they were allowing them to wail so loudly just before midnight. This morning a friend emailed me with the bad news, and I went to the local newspaper's website to see the details: our beloved community park, Imagination Station, burnt last night.

We still don't know how it happened, but it's obvious that this was not a natural cause – it was not lightning, and there is no electricity capable of sparking such a blaze at the park. Unfortunately, this seems to be the work of people, and whether it was intentional or an accident remains to be seen. At least no one was hurt physically in the blaze. But many in the community are emotionally distraught, for Imagination Station was a wonderful park where citizens from throughout the area would spend warm summer nights, cool autumn evenings, and many a Saturday afternoon with their families and friends. Funded by private donations and built by the hands of thousands of volunteers in 1994, it was a source of community pride. Everyone came together to create Imagination Station; kids volunteered their cool playground ideas, while adults physically built the play equipment and still others provided thousands of meals for the builders. The community worked together day and night, rain and shine for 6 days until it was finished. The final product was amazing, impressing locals and out of town visitors alike. And now much of it is gone.



Many people came out tonight to walk past the charred ruins. In a way, it was like paying one's respects, and many people stared at the blackened splinters in stunned silence. There were whispers, "Who would do such a thing?" and "How did this happen?", and one woman walked by slowly, saying quietly, "We will build it again. And it will be more beautiful than ever." I believe her to be right. People came together in 1994 and built an amazing park, and people will come together again to replace the one we lost yesterday.

"The Greeks built an Acropolis – And Noah built an Ark
The Russians built a Sputnik But Bryan built a Park"
(Bryan Times, 1957)



****UPDATE****

There was an update in today's (9/17/10) newspaper saying that tons of people have stepped forward and created a volunteer organization to rebuild. It was insured, and [Spangler Candy Company](#) has stepped forward to cover any costs not paid for by insurance. There is a [Facebook page dedicated to the rebuilding of Imagination Station](#) where people can share their memories of the park or volunteer for the rebuilding. Unfortunately the fire investigation and the insurance company's investigation will both take awhile, and nothing can be done until they are finished. They hope to have the playground replaced by Spring, but that is still a long time, especially for those of us with kids. Sure there are other parks in town, but Imagination Station was the favorite. □ The little town made the big Toledo news though, they had a nice story: