

**WHO:**

Kate's Kause  
Playground

**WHERE:**

Elmira, Ontario

**WHAT:**

SofSURFACES' SofTILE Premium recycled rubber flooring was installed in an accessible community playground

**WHEN:**

Summer 2012

**WHY:**

SofSURFACES Soft-ILE provides a safe, durable, slip-resistant surface for children, catering to a range of mobility needs for children of all abilities visiting the Kate's Kause playground.



# KATE'S KAUSE PLAYGROUND

## SITUATION

Kate's Kause is a charitable, not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to community projects and awareness related to a rare, neurological disorder called the Angelman Syndrome (AS). The organization was inspired by founder, Kelly Meissner's young daughter Kate, who was diagnosed with AS as an infant. Raising a child with AS, Kelly understands the importance for children to interact with other children in playgrounds as part of their development and socialization. However, she also recognizes that not all community playgrounds are necessarily safe and accessible for children of all abilities.

## SOLUTION

In Spring 2012, Kate's Kause dedicated its fundraising efforts and resources to building a safe and all-inclusive play environment within the community that would be accessible to children with both physical, as well as cognitive disabilities.

As part of the playground design, durable, yet safe flooring was a major consideration as children are at high risk for falls and head injuries on the playground. After considering several materials, Kate's Kause chose the SofTILE Premium product developed by SofSURFACES.

North American playground standards require that playground surfaces pass a minimum level of safety performance, not to exceed 1000 Head Injury Criteria (HIC). The HIC is determined by dropping a specially designed and weighted object onto the surface being tested, and then calculating the severity of impact force and associated risk of brain injury to the user.

Developed using hollow-core technology and recycled rubber materials to better absorb shock, SofTILE has been engineered to provide an HIC rating

below 570, which is also the threshold considered safe for children in an automobile crash. Since playground surfaces harden over time, this extremely safe HIC rating ensures that the surface will remain compliant to the standard over time.

"As parents, we can all appreciate the safety concerns we have when our children are playing in public spaces," says Kelly Meissner, Founder, Kate's Kause. "SofSURFACES products just seemed to have all the best that we want for our children and community, from durability and easy maintenance to child safety, aesthetic appeal and the eco-friendly factor."

In addition to the safety and accessibility benefits that this playground provides to the children and families visiting the Kate's Kause Playground, a recent survey by Ontario Tire Stewardship (OTS) also supports the project. Conducted by Research House, the poll shows that 96 per cent of Ontarians agree that local municipalities should incorporate sustainable products into community spaces, such as parks, recreational centers and sporting arenas.



# WHY RECYCLED TIRES

SofSURFACES is an OTS-registered recycled product manufacturer that uses up to 93 per cent recycled tire content in their products. The environmentally sustainable SofTILE playground surfacing used in the Kate's Kause playground used the equivalent of 1,753 recycled passenger tires.

Ontario Tire Stewardship is the organization that facilitates responsible tire recycling to ensure that the more than 12 million scrap tires produced in Ontario are diverted from hazardous landfills and burning facilities. Through its Used Tires Program and industry partners, OTS is actively involved in fostering new markets for innovative tire derived products. Since the program's inception, more than 33 million scrap tires have been recycled in Ontario.

Through Ontario Tire Stewardship's community grant program, Kate's Kause received a grant to help offset the cost of the SofSURFACES product.

"SofTILE was a great fit to address the needs of this playground, and we were thrilled to be approached for this community project," says Jeromy Morningstar, Managing Director, SofSURFACES. "The durable design of SofSURFACES products makes them ideal for use in accessible outdoor play areas where child safety, low product maintenance and environmental considerations are key."

But in Ontario Tire Stewardship's perspective, the positive impact of sourcing products from SofSURFACES goes beyond the safety benefits. "Sourcing OTS-registered SofSURFACES products is a way to re-purpose responsibly managed tire waste and re-introduce it to the market as a highly sustainable and innovative product," says Andrew Horsman, Executive Director, Ontario Tire Stewardship. "Not only do these products help mitigate some of the safety concerns around common playground injuries, but sourcing them from Ontario manufacturers also ensures that positive contributions are being made to the environment and Ontario's green economy."

**About SofSURFACES**  
[www.sofsurfaces.com](http://www.sofsurfaces.com)

SofSURFACES has been engaged in the design and manufacture of playground surfacing systems for the past 20 years. They are currently the largest producer of safety tiles in North America. SofSURFACES distributes their products nationally through a network of qualified distributors.

SofTILE has been engineered with a unique hollow core impact pedestal built into the underside of the tile system. The functionality of the system revolves around the mechanical design of the impact pedestal which creates a buckling and recoil action upon impact. The unique underside design absorbs significantly more energy during a fall which reduces the likelihood of brain trauma. The hollow core impact pedestal design is also more resistant to factors that negatively affect safety performance such as aging, extreme temperatures and contamination with sand and dirt.

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