



City of New Bedford
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CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

K-9 Sgt. Sean M. Gannon Memorial Playground dedicated at Campbell Elementary School

New Bedford, Massachusetts– City and school officials, members of the Gannon family, law enforcement, and the Elwyn G. Campbell Elementary School community formally dedicated the K-9 Sgt. Sean M. Gannon Memorial Playground at Campbell School on Thursday.

Sgt. Sean M. Gannon, a New Bedford native who grew up across the street from Campbell Elementary School, served as a Yarmouth Police Department K-9 officer. He was killed in the line of duty on April 12, 2018.

Since 2017, the Campbell School PTO had raised funds to support upgrades to the school's playground, initiated by then-PTO president Heather Sivil and member Jill Zangao. In 2018, after raising about \$20,000, the Playground Committee had announced it was seeking donations from the community to support a renovated playground. Some of the first people to reach out were neighbors Patrick and Denise Gannon, who pledged to support the fundraising drive – just days before their son, Sgt. Sean Gannon, was killed on duty in Yarmouth.

After Sgt. Gannon's death, the Playground Committee learned of several connections the Gannons had to the school – that the Gannons lived adjacent to the school, that Sean had played on the school grounds and later trained for the police academy there, and that Denise taught music at the school early in her career – and felt it would be a fitting tribute to honor Sean Gannon's memory. The School Committee voted unanimously in May 2018 to support Mayor Jon Mitchell's motion to honor Sgt. Gannon by naming the new playground at Campbell in his honor.

The Campbell School K-9 Sgt. Sean M. Gannon Memorial Playground Committee has raised more than \$200,000 through events, fundraising sales and partnerships, to support a more significant reconstruction of the school's playground. The Committee is grateful for the generous support of major donors including Southcoast Health, the City of New Bedford's Community Preservation Committee, District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn, TL Edwards Inc., and the Carney Family Foundation, along with the hundreds of individuals and organizations who have donated to support the playground, with special thanks to Victor Fernandes for his guidance. The City of New Bedford's Community Preservation Committee awarded \$75,000 to the playground project.

The playground had its groundbreaking in August and was completed this month.

The K-9 Sgt. Sean M. Gannon Playground Committee is led by Carla Mourao, chair; Sandy Douglas, co-chair; and Mike Tavares, treasurer. Its other members include Campbell School Principal Lisa Wheelden, Nichole Brody (a 5th Grade teacher at Campbell who was Sgt. Gannon's teacher at the parochial elementary school he attended) Karen Camille, Kristen Canessa, Jeannette Crowley, Kim Heydt, Paul Douglas, Louise Weigel, Samantha Laubenstein, and Nelson and Kelly DeGouveia.

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