

## Pre-school Students Get a Nature-based Playground

For Metroland

*The new natural playground at Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care on Brock University's campus includes nature-based play activities, including the hobbit house shown here, as well as a hillside slide, raised garden beds, bike path, and a sideways tree.*

### Niagara This Week - St. Catharines

ST. CATHARINES — Nature was the inspiration behind a new playground installed at Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care.

Unveiled on Thursday evening, the new play area for pre-school aged students will provide them the opportunity to participate in nature-based play activities. From a hillside double slide, a hobbit house and water trough that runs off into a sandpit, outdoor musical instruments, mud pit and a sideways tree, there will be lots of ways for the kids to engage with nature while enjoying some time outdoors.



“The new natural playground is just another way that the staff at Rosalind Blauer shows their commitment to nature-based play,” said Helene Randle, executive director for Rosalind Blauer.

The centre for child care's board announced the passing of the motion for the natural playground in January 2016. They agreed to fund the Bienenstock Natural Playground.

“We are very privileged to have the funds to put a state-of-the-art playground at the Centre,” said board president Nicole Johnson. “The support we received from the Board, the Brock University Student Union (BUSU), Niagara Region Children's Services, and the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) have made this venture possible and will benefit the students of the Centre for many years to come.”

The playground also features a dramatic play area, a bike path, and raised garden beds.

“The care we show, as a community, in how we design and build our children's playspace, results in our children feeling cared for and respected”, said Adam Bienenstock, founder of Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds.

The mission of Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care is to provide a safe, stimulating learning environment for children and their families in a licensed, non-profit child care centre which services students, faculty and staff of Brock University, as well as the neighbouring community.

“Last year the Centre took part in a Forest School pilot program with Debra Harwood, an Early Childhood Program professor at Brock University conducting research in this area,” said Randle. “There was such a positive response to the Forest School program that it will become a mainstay program for the Kinder-aged students. The natural playground allows students to transition smoothly into the Forest School Program where the students' classroom is off-site in the forest close to the Centre which is on Brock's main campus.”