

Give Kids The World, Baynum collaborate on refreshed Life Floor

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KISSIMMEE, Fla. — Beloved by the amusement industry and even more so by the families they've served, **Give Kids The World Village** is a special place providing memorable vacations to families with children who have critical illnesses. Its message of Happiness Inspires Hope is taken to heart.

While many theme parks in Central Florida welcome families in the **Make a Wish** and **Give Kids The World** programs, there are days when visiting families enjoy relaxing activities right at the Village.

Recently, a collaboration between the Village and **Life Floor** has brought new life to a dated splash play area. Previously, the flooring was finished with Marcite, which is expensive to repair. Its hard surface offered no safety characteristics.

"The difference is night and day!" said **Michael Bausman**, director of facilities and resources, Give Kids The World (GKTW). "The old surface was one neutral color, and, of course, all the patches were always visible. The new flooring is so vibrant and fun and is certainly in line with what we do by providing a fun, unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience."

"GKTW and Life Floor had been in talks since meeting at IAAPA Expo 2019," said **Briana Valente**, Life Floor. "We sketched out some initial options, but they had to put the project on hold because of lack of funds around the 2020 uncertainty. Then in 2023, they reached out again



Above left shows what the play area looked like before the transformation, and the colors and refresh (above right) have brought new life. The splash area (below) helps entertain families that are staying at the Village. COURTESY BAYNUM



because they were considering refinishing the splash pad. They said their contacts at **Universal**, **Disney**, and **Martin Aquatic** had all recommended us because of projects we've completed with them. After touring [area facilities], the GKTW team was impressed by our immersive theming capabilities and accessible features."

Life Floor offers a Matching Funds Grant Program.

"Our sales team member who worked on the project, **MaryAnn Eifert**, has been a Central Florida resident for the last 20+ years," noted Valente. "As such, she's well aware of GKTW and their mission. When she heard about the potential project, she encouraged them to apply. Once we received their application, MaryAnn advocated for GKTW to receive a 100% matching fund grant for tile materials. She spoke to our long-time installer and registered aquatic partner, **Baynum Solutions**, to ask them to offer a dis-

count on labor to support the cause. Having known GKTW for many years through the IAAPA GKTW Golf Tournament, Baynum was enthusiastic about collaborating and offered a significant labor discount."

"The team at Baynum Solutions is passionate about the work we do, our customers, and the role the amusement industry plays in bringing joy to guests," said Baynum Solutions President and CEO, **Walt Bowser**. "Partnering with LifeFloor on the installation of a colorful, comfortable and family-friendly new floor for Give Kids the World's interactive water garden is part of a decades-long commitment to supporting the important work of Give Kids the World. Give Kids the World is a personal passion for me as it has been my great privilege to be part of the IAAPA Give Kids the World charity Golf Tournament for more than 20 years. The amusement industry, and Give Kids the World, can count on Baynum Solutions to support the mission of providing a magical week of simple joys to wish families."

"Give Kids The World is a mission that matters," added Eifert. "This is one of the few organizations I've seen go above and beyond creating opportunities for entire families to make meaningful memories with kids who might not have as long. Because of that mission, I knew Baynum was undoubtedly the right choice to partner with; their values and heart for people are aligned with Life Floor's."



The area is named Jack's Wacky Water Works splash pad.

Life Floor is quick to give credit to GKTW for the design itself. Life Floor made simple adaptations to make it more cost-effective and easier to install.

"Since this facility is a renovation rather than a new build, we specified our Transition Strips for the borders of the installation to provide an ADA accessible, no-trip transition from the surrounding area to the splash pad," noted Valente. "Every single one of our projects is created with accessibility in mind. Sometimes that includes color zoning/visual signals or tactile signals, but those elements depend on the unique requests of a facility. Regardless of the visual design, our products are accessible by nature and promote safety for all kinds of diverse play styles. We believe that flooring is a feature, not just a background element."

"It's so much safer!" Bausman told *Amusement Today*. "In the event we do have to do a repair in the future, it can now be done

with no impact to the families and making certain it is always show-ready!"

"Kids can hop from bubble to bubble, roll along the tentacles using water wheelchairs, relax and sit in low-spray zones supported by our cushioned tiles, or pretend to surf on the surf-board play elements," added Valente. "These elements transport kids to new worlds of imagination that would otherwise be impossible on a blank slab of concrete. It's incredible to see how kids truly play differently on Life Floor. The difference is made possible through boundless free play opportunities."

"While our families' wishes are to visit the parks, we find that so many families truly appreciate the atmosphere they find here in the Village," said Bausman. "They sometimes run into families dealing with similar illnesses or issues like themselves and just being able to share their experiences can often bring a sense of relief. The intimacy the Village provides is an opportunity to play as a family, where the focus can be just on them."



The Baynum team installed the Life Floor product at Give Kids The World Village. COURTESY BAYNUM