

# SOARING EAGLE

Pontchartrain Elementary: December 2008

## Ground Broken – Promises Delivered

While an African elephant has the world's longest gestation period (660 days), the KidSense yard is a close runner-up!

When the idea for an outdoor sensory yard percolated up 18 months ago, we never imagined how well worth waiting it would be. Construction of this beautifully designed playground is finally underway: yep, the "baby" has arrived!

At the KidSense groundbreaking on November 20, **Mandeville Mayor Eddie Price** and **Councilman Jerry Coogan** heartily congratulated the tiny band of special needs parents and full army of professionals who have contributed enormous amounts of time, expertise, and funding for our children's benefit.

This month, as students peek out the windows of the library, they will find an oval wheelchair path and walkway to our future textural mural and brick-laid pergola. They may note rectangular "pads" upon which rubber safety tiles and equipment will be seated. What cannot be seen from a distance is the handiwork of KidSense's mosaic team.

Authentic Native American arrowheads, 500 million year old trilobite fossils, and words like FRIENDS – pebble written in Braille – adorn the pathways. Enormous heron footprints lumber

across the oval path, while raccoon tracks skitter away.

With a touch of whimsy, these educational and texture-rich mosaics will offer touchable, teachable moments to bring lessons alive.

The mosaics were completed during Thanksgiving week by volunteers (who will reportedly do anything to get out of cooking): **Paula Ourso, Roxanne Newman, Stacey Autin, and LeAnne Cantrell**. Thank you, friends!



Finally, we must thank **Bruce Wainer of Wainer Companies** who is building the KidSense playground for us. Although the Wainers live on the south-shore, Bruce has been a quiet and long-standing force for good here. Not only did he build our Tammany Trace and Trailheads, Bruce also coordinated and constructed the Kids Konnection playground at Koop Drive.

Next spring, he begins work on the new Children's Village, also at Koop Drive.

With his generous heart, he has made our hometown – and now Pontchartrain Elementary – a better place for all children. With the season of "thanksgiving" upon us, thank you for your kindness, Mr. Wainer.

See you on the KidSense yard!

*(pictured are KidSense Founders, LeAnne Cantrell and Bruce Wainer)*