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### VILLA PARK

## Plans for improved skate park keep rolling

By Adam Rosen  
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Two years ago, Villa Park resident Paula Jimenez made her first trip to the village's skate park.

She took her then 7-year-old son to the park as he began to get into the sport of skateboarding. It was a day she said she will never forget, but not for the usual reason.

Instead of taking pictures of her son on his board, she focused her camera on the garbage rolling across the park like tumbleweeds, graffiti painted on walls and ramps, and a mattress other skaters told her "a homeless person slept on."

"I was so in shock and embarrassed to be a resident of Villa Park," Jimenez said. "The kids couldn't even skate there because the cracks were so bad."

That trip to the park sparked Jimenez into what became two years of work and a new skate park coming to the village early next year.

After her trip, Jimenez gathered a group of her friends, neighbors and skaters and formed a committee that has met on a Saturday afternoon at least once a month to discuss plans on creating a new park.

Jimenez was named chairwoman of the Villa Park Skatepark Committee, and in March, she went in front of the Villa Park Village Board to request the village match money raised for a new skate park dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

The board approved the request, and Jimenez said the committee now is in the process of finding donors for materials and purchasing park items.

"We've had a lot of people offering their help," Jimenez said. "We're shooting to have it completed by spring of 2010."

The new park will be on the grounds of the Iowa Community Center at 338 N. Iowa Ave., next to Addison Road and the Union Pacific railroad tracks.

"It's a good location," Jimenez said. "It will be very visible, not tucked in a corner or hiding from the public."

Jimenez said the new park will feature additional items that nonskaters will enjoy, including a water fountain, benches for seating, along with security cameras and lights.



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Staff photo by John Cox

Villa Park resident Alex Huetsen does a trick at the Villa Park skatepark Wednesday.

"We went out of our way when we did this, so we don't miss any detail and we can all be proud of it," Jimenez said.

Without a skate park in his home town, Lombard resident Alex Loughman travels west to Glen Ellyn to their skate park. During the summer, Loughman, a skateboarder for about four years, said he can log more than four hours a day on his board. The 14-year-old said he is glad a skate park is being built closer to his home.

"It sounds like it's gonna be pretty cool," Loughman said.

Loughman spent part of his day Tuesday checking out the latest boards and shoes available at Motiv8 Skate Shop at 415 N. Ardmore Ave. in Villa Park.

Motiv8 owner and longtime skateboarder Scott Mitchell brought a 30-year dream to

fruition last month when the shop opened in Villa Park in late May.

After checking out other suburbs for a location for his store, Mitchell said he chose Villa Park because so many residents were telling him of the need for a skate shop in the village.

"This town is so pro-skateboarding," Mitchell said. "I knew I found a home when all the people were so good to me."

Jimenez said she is glad the new skate park will not only generate a place for skateboarders, but also can help the local economy with Mitchell selling skateboard hardware, along with T-shirts, shoes and other equipment.

"Scott got really excited, and we're glad he a part of this," Jimenez said. "He's been very helpful and absolutely wonderful."