

LOCAL

Dolphins, Neighbors Run Big "Play" With Big Impact For Kids

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Volunteers build new playgrounds for children at The Lodge. (CBS4)

(CBS4) — A community collaboration helped restore a playground in one of South Florida's special sanctuaries when Neighbors 4 Neighbors teamed up with the Miami Dolphins and pulled through on a big play with a big impact.

A summer surprise awaits the children living at The Lodge, a shelter and home for victims of domestic violence.

"We're a 40-bed, 10-crib stay and we're full to capacity at all times," Monica Padilla, The Lodge's Childhood Advocacy Supervisor explained to CBS4's Nicole Maristany.



Reporting Nicole Maristany

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The children living at [The Lodge](#) have enjoyed a playground with outdoor playhouses for years, but after years of weathering, bugs, bees, nails and broken windows, it was time for some new ones.

The Lodge reached out to Neighbors 4 Neighbors for help, and Neighbors called on the [Miami Dolphins Special Teams volunteer corp](#). The Special Teams were willing to take on the challenge of rebuilding the playhouses and even stepped up to buy brand new ones.

"Once we got that support and that donation then we told the kids what was happening. You had to see the looks on their faces, they couldn't believe it! They were so excited!" exclaimed Padilla.

The kids weren't the only ones excited about the idea of a new place to play.

"The playground is very good for them because they just keep their mind busy so that they don't think about the problems at home that we have with the domestic violence situation," explained Lodge resident, Wanda Gomez. "This means a lot, this is a safe place for me and my kids," she added.

As the slides were assembled and the boxes thrown away, the volunteers looked at the new playground with pride.

"You know how great the kids are going to feel when they come home and see this? Because this is like 'Oh, we have a new playhouse!' It's just a joy," said Dolphins Special Teams volunteer Jennifer Bryant.

For mothers like Gomez, the new playgrounds bring peace of mind and gratitude.

"I want to say thanks to the Dolphins, thanks to everybody and thanks to the volunteers especially," said Gomez.

To volunteer at [The Lodge](#), or with [The Miami Dolphins Special Teams](#), call [Neighbors 4 Neighbors](#) at **(305) 597-4404**.

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