

My name is Ali Karpenko. I am 13 years old, and I live in Grand Forks. I was born with a mild case of Spina Bifida, a neural tube birth defect. Most people with Spina Bifida are unable to walk. I am very lucky, as I am very physically able.

In November of 2006, I entered the "Win A Boundless Playground Essay Contest"; sponsored by Hasbro, Playskool, GameTime, and Boundless Playgrounds. The grand prize was a \$300,000 all-accessible Boundless Playground. Through the Grand Forks Park District, I nominated Sertoma Park; located behind Altru Hospital and Rehab. I entered on behalf of kids like me with disabilities. In January of 2007, Boundless Playgrounds notified me that I was one of the top 20 finalists out of 930 entries, from 44 states.

After completing the due-diligence and meeting with a Playskool representative, we waited. In mid- April, the grand prize winner was announced. An essay submitted jointly by a 3rd grade teacher and a mother was chosen.

For being a finalist, GameTime is offering us a discount on the playground equipment. It is the chance of a lifetime for our city. Our goal now is to raise \$200,000. We have formed a committee and are working on our fundraising efforts. I can't say enough about the wonderful people who are working so hard on this playground. Especially, the Sertoma Club, the Grand Forks Park District, North East Human Services, Grand Forks Public Health, and many other wonderful organizations. My family and friends have also been great support for me. I never could have gotten this far without all the people who are helping me.

Please join us in supporting Ali's Boundless Playground for Sertoma Park. It will be something that everyone can enjoy for years to come!