

BCK-IBI Group CANstruction: A Winner for Our Community!

This year, the BCK-IBI Group once again participated in the 4th Annual CANstruction® of the Southern Tier, run by the Food Bank. CANstruction® is an international hunger-relief competition where architects, engineers, and contractors compete to design and build giant structures made entirely from cans of food. All food from the event is then donated to the Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

Our structure was titled "Squash out Hunger" and was a representation of a pumpkin patch with a giant jack-o-lantern as the focal point. Our design was created by choosing specific cans to represent the organic colors of pumpkins, using different orange and green cans.

It is reported that each week over 11,000 individuals visit a hunger-relief agency served by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. This year, thanks to the efforts of this event, 25,453 pounds of food, valued at \$40,725, and \$12,000 in sponsorship, were raised to help support the Food Bank. BCK-IBI Group is proud to support such an event and was thrilled when we were awarded the Honorable Mention award this year. We hope our participation will help bring awareness to more organizations in Broome County to get more support in our area. We look forward to participating again next year!



To Merge or Not: The Big Question for School Districts

School districts in New York State are facing unprecedented challenges. The pressure to prepare all students for college and career readiness, significant declines in enrollment, and the current financial crisis create a perfect storm for schools. As a result, school district leaders all across the state are realizing that business as usual is no longer an option.



As districts struggle with these challenges, many are investigating the possibility of merging with another district. Is a merger right for your district? It might be...or it might not be!

The state has provided significant financial incentives to encourage districts to merge. Increases in building aid for new construction, additional building aid for existing debt, and significant incentive operating aid make the consideration of

merger very attractive.

What is a school district to do with all of this state aid? It is recommended this aid be used for three purposes: financing the costs associated with a merger, saving some of the money to ensure long-term financial stability, and immediately reducing the local tax levy.

To quickly find out if a merger is right for your district, determine whether or not the amount of incentive operating aid will be significant enough to reduce the tax rate of the merged district to at least the lower rate of the two merging districts. School district mergers are emotional undertakings. If taxes do not decrease, or at least become stabilized in both districts, the chances for a successful merger decrease dramatically.

Read more on the reorganization of school districts in this [guide](#).

BCK-IBI Group Raises \$5,000 for Fight Against Brain Cancer

The employees of BCK-IBI Group held a fundraiser in March 2012 to benefit the "Sean's Standing Strong Memorial Fund." Sean Shumaker, the son of one of our employees, Beth Shumaker, recently lost his battle with brain cancer. Beth and her husband Andy started the memorial fund to assist other children with cancer throughout their journey, whatever their needs might be. Sean's hope was that his struggle would somehow help other children in their fight against this terrible disease.



The fundraiser was a huge success! We held 50/50 raffles, raffled a Kindle Fire, conducted penny wars, auctioned gift baskets, and much more. The event included food, entertainment, karaoke, and fun for all. Several other IBI offices and individual employees generously contributed to the event, including the offices in Kitchener, Toronto, Ottawa, Pompano Beach, Irvine, and San Jose. Over \$5,000 was raised and contributions are still being received.

As of August 2012, "Sean's Standing Strong Memorial Fund" is officially a non-profit organization. Therefore, Sean's family can move forward in assisting young adults that have been diagnosed with brain cancer. They will continue to hold fundraisers in order to help as many people as possible and to keep Sean's spirit alive.

Beth and Andy Shumaker would like to thank to everyone for their generosity.

For more information contact Beth at ashumaker@stny.rr.com.

Playground Maintenance: Making Sure Your Engineered Wood Fiber Playground Surfacing Continues to Meet Safety and Accessibility Requirements



As of March 15, 2012, school playgrounds must meet the 2010 Department of Justice ADA Standards. That means your playground surfacing material must meet both ASTM F 1951, the standard for accessibility, and ASTM F 1292, the impact-attenuation requirement.

Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) playground surfacing meets these requirements, but only if installed and maintained correctly. Engineered Wood Fiber must be installed over a drainage layer, must be compacted properly, and wear mats must be installed under swings and at the bottom of slides. If BCK-IBI Group designed your EWF playground surfacing after 2004, these elements were provided.

However, EWF playground surfacing must also be inspected and maintained to ensure continued compliance. Loose fill materials like EWF are displaced by use and must be raked back into place to ensure proper depths are maintained. Consult your original design plans for the use zones and the depth of surfacing required. If the EWF remains wet for long periods, check drainage outflows after a rain. If the underdrainage is not working, not only will the fiber need to be replaced more often, but its resiliency can be compromised, especially when temperatures are below freezing. Check wear mats regularly, turn them for even wear, and replace them as needed.

IPEMA, the International Playground Equipment Manufacturer's Association, has written guidelines for EWF maintenance. Contact BCK-IBI Group if you would like a copy sent to you.

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