Volunteers from the Decorative Concrete Council (DCC) and the Manufacturer’s Advisory Council (MAC), traveled to Seneca, SC February 29 – March 3 to install a new playground for the youngsters at Tamassee Elementary School.

Todd Scharich, ASCC director of member services and decorative concrete specialist, was the project manager. The project consisted of a spray texture concrete overlayment and colored opaque sealers to create games and pathways throughout the 7,500 SF play area. All manpower and materials were donated by DCC and MAC members.

Hopscotch, bean bag toss, mimic me and four square are some of the games ASCC members enjoyed helping create.

At our Annual Conference last September, CEMEX presented a day long session about their transformational commitment to safety. They told of how CEMEX has worked towards making safety the responsibility of every person within their organization, and the trials and tribulations to creating a better culture of safety. What struck me about their commitment to safety was that Karl Watson, then president of CEMEX, personally took the time to present at our conference. This reinforced my opinion that they are a company with a true commitment to being a safe employer, and sincerely care about the welfare of their employees.

Now for the best part. At the end of the presentation, Karl offered to make their program available for any of our members who desire to set up a similar program. We at Keystone, along with the local CEMEX Ready Mix group, are offering this opportunity in Houston on April 5th and 6th for other ASCC members. The two-day program is called “Train the Trainer” and it teaches you how to set up your own safety program, modeled after the success of CEMEX. Keystone will be participating and I know of six other ASCC members signed up to date.

I am excited about this great opportunity for ASCC members to learn from such a large and diverse company. I hope my discussion of this is timely enough that you might consider taking advantage of this unbelievable opportunity. There is still time. If you truly want your organization to be committed to safety, this is an opportunity that you shouldn’t let pass. I hope to see you here in Houston on April 5th & 6th on our journey of becoming the safest employers we can!
Working around children during the community project, coupled with a visit from my three-year-old grandson has reminded me of how our attitude about the future improves when viewed through children’s eyes. Do you remember what it’s like to be a child? It’s fascinating to watch, but you don’t just have to be a spectator! Try to incorporate a children’s view into your everyday life and see the difference it can make. Everything is new and a learning experience.

Are you excited to wake up in the morning, or do you dread the commute and the back breaking work ahead? Every day is new to kids, so everything seems exciting and full of possibilities. Instead of dreading the daily tasks, attack each project, clear your mind and be open to different paths to completion. Children are interested in learning as much as they can. They want to know everything! As the children of Tamassee played on our community project they wanted more than just to play. They wanted to know what we did, how we did it, and could we do it at their house!

Our community project had numerous setbacks, delays, and ultimately a tremendous amount of challenges. By stepping back and viewing the process through children’s eyes it quickly changed my attitude. The challenges became new opportunities, and the process became a learning experience.

A huge thanks to companies supplying tools, materials and manpower. They were H&C Decorative Concrete Products, Patterned Concrete of Cincinnati, Concrete Mystique Engraving, Increte, Sundek of Washington, Multiquip, Wagman Metal Products, Wayne Brothers, ChemSystems Inc., Surfkoat, A.W. Cook Cement Products, and Decorative Concrete Resources.

The first two attempts to complete this project in November were rained out. Our valiant volunteers were undeterred and came back to fight another day; as all good contractors do. The kids at Tamassee were happy they did!
Near Hit events shared courtesy of the Safety & Risk Management Council to help other members prevent accidents and injuries. If you have a Near Hit that could help your fellow contractors send Bev a brief write-up at bgarnant@asconline.org. We will not identify your company unless asked to do so.

During a recent near hit, we identified a hazard involving blind spots for moving equipment and ground personnel exposed to contact with this equipment. An 843 Bobcat skidloader with a fork attachment was utilized to unload a flatbed delivery truck. The operator was near the side of the truck positioning the forks under a pallet. The delivery truck driver walked directly behind the skid loader. The driver was pulled to the side at which time the operator pulled rearward without looking over his shoulder.

Corrective Actions:

- During pretask planning, all moving equipment (skid-loaders, forklifts, pick-up trucks, delivery trucks, concrete trucks, etc…) should be identified.
- Each piece of moving equipment should be evaluated for operator’s blind spots.
- Training for all exposed ground crew members including:
  - Equipment/operator blind spots
  - Minimum safe distances from equipment
  - Safe work procedures on how to approach mobile equipment
  - Visual, voice, or signal communication that shall be made with the operator prior to approaching mobile equipment
- Maintaining one’s visibility to the operator while approaching the equipment
- Operator responsibilities, such as placing the transmission in neutral, setting the parking brake, and indicating that it is safe to approach the equipment
- Each employee working on the ground who is exposed to mobile equipment should be provided with a high visibility warning vest or other high visibility garments. A high visibility garment is defined as being a Performance Class 2 garment or greater as specified by ANSI/ISEA Standard 107-2004.
Established in 1957, the National Concrete Contractors Association, was reorganized as the American Society of Concrete Constructors in 1963, renamed the American Society for Concrete Construction in the 1970s, and in the 1990s became the American Society of Concrete Contractors (ASCC). An early ASCC membership benefit was the telephone Hotline, which contractors called for answers to concrete-related questions.

In 1966, Ward Malisch joined the faculty at the University of Missouri-Rolla (UMR), where he taught courses in concrete construction. At that time, Concrete Construction magazine sent press over-run copies to professors who requested them. Ward was an avid reader of the magazine and regularly provided as many as 90 copies per semester to his students. It was through the magazine that he learned about ASCC and the Hotline.

Ward took a leave of absence for UMR in the late 1970s when he joined Daniel Construction Company as a quality control inspector during construction of Missouri’s Callaway Nuclear Power Plant. He joined ASCC in 1978 to get Hotline assistance from Bill Kuenning, then editor of Concrete Construction. Ward didn’t know at the time that he would be answering the Hotline less than 10 years later, replacing Kuenning who had passed away. Ward continued to answer the Hotline while serving as senior managing director at the American Concrete Institute (ACI) and later as technical director, then concrete construction specialist at ASCC.

For almost 30 years Ward was the voice of the Hotline. Hundreds of ASCC members have benefitted from his knowledge, dedication, and persistence in returning calls and emails. The Hotline has consistently been ranked as one of the foremost member benefits. During his tenure, Hotline questions became more complex and, in the email era, often included photos, drawings, excerpts from specifications, and project correspondence. During the past 10 years, he and I have spent hours on one call, researching ACI documents and other industry sources to help contractors avoid or solve problems.

Currently Ward is the principal investigator for a research project dealing with evaluation of formed concrete surfaces. He is interacting with all four Concrete Industry Management (CIM) schools for data collection. With that work load, and a desire to spend more time on projects without a tight deadline, he is passing the Hotline to me. So if you’re calling and don’t hear Ward’s grizzly voice, I’m afraid it’s now Bruce at the other end of the line. I can only hope to live up to expectations.

Please join me in acknowledging all of Ward’s efforts on behalf of ASCC. He will still be representing contractor interests at ACI, coauthoring occasional articles, and contributing to the ASCC Troubleshooting Newsletters. He can be reached at (615) 449-4444 or by email at wmalisch@ascconline.org.

New ASCC MIX Group

Beck Concrete Construction hosted a new ASCC MIX Group on March 4 at the Construction Association of South Florida in Fort Lauderdale. Beck Concrete Construction, Command Construction, Lakebrink’s Custom Concrete, Mark Cardinal Concrete Construction and Samson Concrete Construction shared information on best practices. Ken Schwartz of Certified Insurance Solutions was on hand to discuss risk management strategies affecting the industry, including steps to mitigate worker’s compensation fraud and schemes to reduce fleet auto insurance. Relationship marketing strategies and long range goal setting were also discussed.

Don’t let another year go by. Become part of ASCC’s next MIX Group. Attend our MIX Orientation meeting April 28 – 30, L.L. Geans Construction Co., Mishawaka, IN. To register contact the ASCC office.