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WHERE ARE BILL AND ALY? CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF POGO PARK

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[Pogo Park](#) is slowly but surely changing the city of Richmond for the better. Toody Maher, the Executive Director of Pogo Park, invited PVF to attend the Pogo Park Products Launch earlier

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this month. This was our chance to catch up with Toody and her team to learn more about their work.

In a nutshell, Pogo Park is taking unused and abandoned city parks and spaces in the Richmond's Iron Triangle and transforming them into beautiful green spaces for residents. They go about these transformations by recruiting community members and training them to use their skills, talents, and imaginations to create incredible green spaces filled with amazing art and play structures.



The [Elm Playlot](#) was the first park that Toody and her team improved. Bill and I got to see this space in person during our tour, and it was impressive. We saw a big tree with decorative lights, a neat walking path, a small community garden, and even a zipline for kids!

The three most notable characteristics of Pogo Park are: its ambition to become a sustainable organization, its passion to empower community members, and its determination to build things from scratch.

"We want to create funding ourselves," says Toody, when describing her vision to make Pogo Park sustainable. They plan to build and sell their own play structures to fund their community projects. Their play structures are inspired by nature, which makes them much more appealing and distinctive than the generic plastic ones at most parks.

Pogo Park aims to create a profitable business with the help of Richmond residents. Community members will be designing, creating, and building these structures while also learning new skills. Toody formed partnerships with businesses like Lawrence Construction Inc. and Scientific Art Studio to provide training to residents who wanted to be a part of Richmond's betterment. Toody says that these apprenticeships have worked very well as they provide supportive environments for residents to hone their skills in areas such as metal and woodworking.

"We can build every single thing ourselves. We are capable of doing a lot," says Toody during our tour of the metal shop near the Harbour-8 Park. Bill and I found this to be true as we looked around at the various products for sale. Pogo Park can build benches, concrete sandboxes, play houses, outdoor streams, climbing structures, water fountains, and so much more.

Their most ambitious project yet is to transform the [Harbour-8 Park](#) into an outdoor community center. There will be a playground area for kids, a series of community-run stores, and other park features that will make it a warm, safe, and inviting place to spend time outdoors. We are excited to see this vision become a reality!



For more information about Toody Maher and Pogo Park, please visit their website at www.pogopark.org.