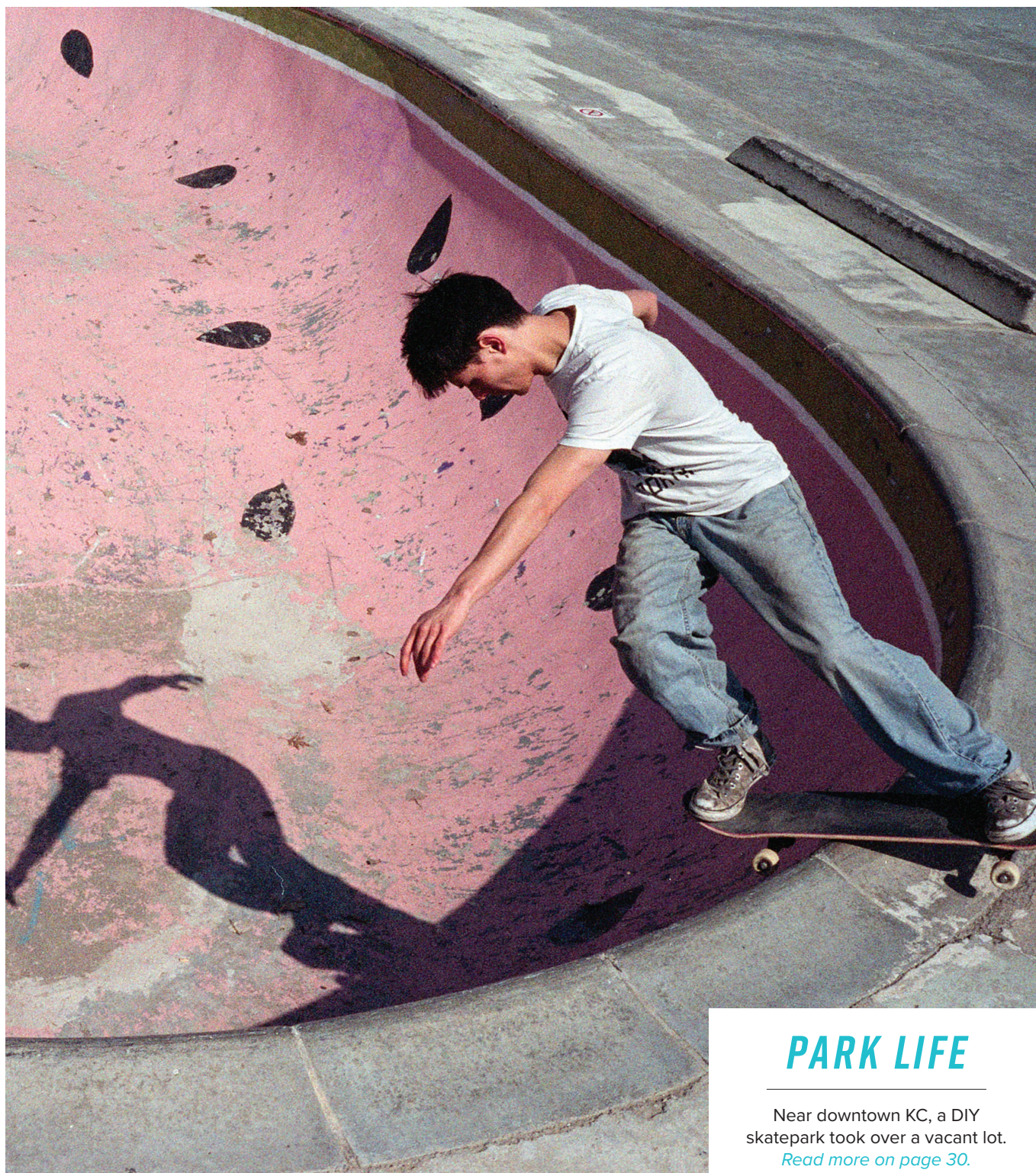


THE LOOP

FOOTBALL x NATURE x FRESH & NEW x INTERVIEW x SKATE PARK



PARK LIFE

Near downtown KC, a DIY skatepark took over a vacant lot.
[Read more on page 30.](#)

Photography by Chase Castor



Ashlin Wang skates The Bump at Harrison St. DIY. The Bump is also called The Pump Hump and The Hump.

POUR MAN'S PARK

How Harrison Street's DIY skatepark turned a blighted, vacant lot into a local treasure

— WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHASE CASTOR

T ALL STARTED with the Jersey barriers. In November 2014, the Housing Authority of Kansas City was looking to assuage neighbor complaints about illicit activity on a vacant lot next to a cul-de-sac that led to an abandoned housing project.

The city installed cement barriers to keep vehicles off the lot. Skaters started showing up. Soon, the quiet, grassy lot in the Columbus Park neighborhood was on its way to being reborn as Kansas City's most distinctive skate park.

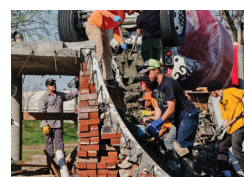
There's no shortage of skate parks in the Kansas

City area, but the Harrison Street skate park is a unique project in that it's a DIY park designed and built entirely by Kansas City's skate community. The park's first quarter pipes were installed using the Jersey barriers and a few loads of concrete. From there, the park expanded onto the cul-de-sac. More than 200 yards of concrete have been poured there to create transitions, quarter and half pipes, and a bowl.

In the early days, the area around the park was littered with needles. Now, parents push their kids through the park on strollers.

THE CONSTRUCTION

Behind-the-scenes photos of what it really takes to work a construction site



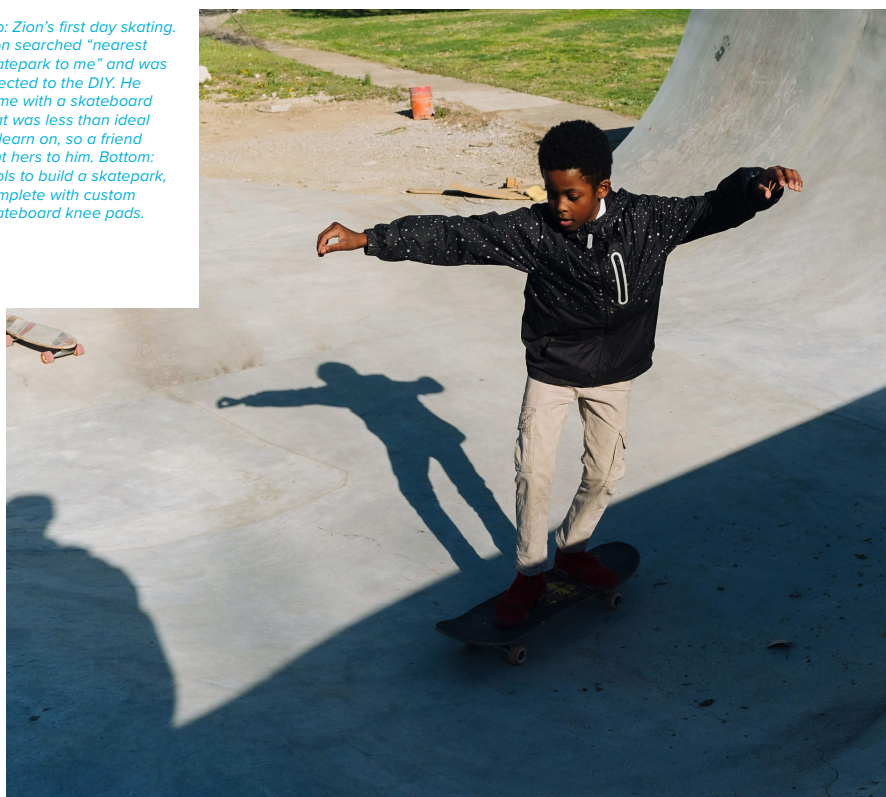
Volunteers ensure concrete is evenly spread onto the formwork. Formwork is the rebar, wood and brick that has been shaped prior to the pour. It gives the concrete something to latch onto and is the skeleton of the shape they want the concrete to make.

Pictured right to left: Andrew Kellison, Elliot Anderson, Kyle Crandall, unknown, Taylor Stetler and unknown concrete truck driver.



Joel Smith of Lawrence, Kansas, puts on his boots with added duct tape support for an ankle injury.

Top: Zion's first day skating. Zion searched "nearest skatepark to me" and was directed to the DIY. He came with a skateboard that was less than ideal to learn on, so a friend lent hers to him. Bottom: Tools to build a skatepark, complete with custom skateboard knee pads.



“You wouldn’t have seen that five years ago,” says Kyle Crandall, the park’s unofficial foreman.



features is a pool painted like a watermelon in the center of the park. There are also a few different murals similar to the watermelon scattered throughout the space.

“What I’ve noticed is, where we do murals, that’s where s--- gets tagged the least,” Crandall says. “The bowl was always getting tagged a ton until we went ahead and painted it like a watermelon. We always paint over the graffiti. If it looks like s--- would it really be around?”

The project has cost about \$65,000 so far — none of it for labor, which has been donated. The park has been funded with grants and donations from organizations like Tony Hawk's Foundation, Charlotte Street Foundation and PBR. There's currently a GoFundMe account set up to raise money for concrete, as the organizers

***“You
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are planning to pour another 1,200 square feet to build on.

As the designer, Crandall takes collaborators' visions and applies them to the design. When he was in high school in St. Louis, Crandall was part of the crew that built the much-missed Kingshighway DIY, later destroyed when the bridge sheltering it was replaced. Building DIY skateparks is a subculture within a subculture, and

THE NUMBERS



65K

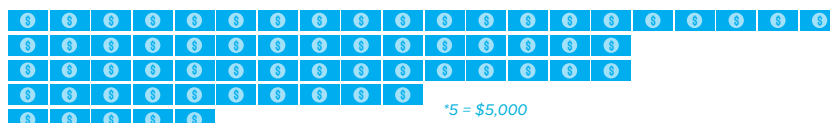
DOLLARS SPENT ON SUPPLIES

4.5

YEARS BUILDING

1.200

**SQUARE FEET OF
CONCRETE TO BE
ADDED THIS YEAR**





Above: Left to right, Andrew Kellison, Kyle Crandall, Nick Stockton and Elliot Anderson shape the concrete while a volunteer cleans up.



Left: Joel Smith, ankle deep in concrete, awaits more concrete from the truck.

the people who build parks typically get involved in new projects when they move.

When it comes to deciding the layout and design of the park, showing up is half the battle.

“It depends on who’s there working,” Crandall says. “I’ll take anyone’s suggestion.”

There are two big differences between Harrison Street and a professionally built park. First, you can skate while folks are working. Second, because there’s such a limited budget, the crew has to be more frugal with the materials, reusing formwork each time concrete is poured. During big pours, the park looks more like a construction site, making it harder to skate.

There are also plans for Harrison Street that go beyond the skate scene.

“What we ultimately want to try to do

is turn this into more of a park than just a skate park,” Crandall says.

They’ve got ideas for a jungle gym, a gazebo and a walking trail that surrounds the lot. Crandall says the idea is to build the park into something that attracts a wide swath of the community beyond the skaters who built it.

“As we really think about the longevity of the place, we have to reach out and make it not just for skateboarding,” Crandall says. ■

GO: 810 E. Fourth St., Kansas City, Mo. For updates on the project, check @harrisonstreetdiy on Instagram.

