



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Go Play!: Non-Profit Organization KaBOOM! Names Greensboro
One of 93 “Playful City USA” Communities

- Communities Across the Country Make Play a Priority Despite Economy -

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a time when 82 percent of parents believe children don't spend enough time playing outside[^], 93 communities across the nation have taken innovative approaches to make play a priority for the health and well-being of their kids. Communities large and small, urban and rural, have created initiatives designed to increase the quantity and quality of play and playgrounds, while improving access to existing play opportunities.

To honor cities and towns making this commitment to play, KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to bringing play back into children's lives, named them Playful City USA communities. In the third year of this annual program, 32 of 93 Playful City USA communities were repeat honorees from 2008, while 22 cities were cited for the third consecutive year. Thirty-nine new communities have joined others in making a commitment to children, including Indianapolis, San Antonio and Greensboro. These 93 communities created and implemented programs to positively impact childhood wellness, public safety and the quality of life.

Each of the 2009 Playful City USA communities demonstrated creative commitments to the cause of play in the areas of quantity, quality and access. Quality relates to the number of usable, open playspaces. Quality involves subjective factors that encourage repeated use and make playspaces engaging, exciting, interesting and fun. Access entails the ability to get to a playspace (roads, trails) and a lack of barriers to the playspace (cost, safety, traffic, locked gates, equity).

Playful City USA celebrates and highlights these unique initiatives developed by communities across the country. A primary goal of Playful City USA is to encourage cities and towns to share creative ideas, concepts and programs in an effort to increase play opportunities for children. City initiatives include:

QUANTITY

- **Dothan, Ala. (pop. 65,447)**
After incorporating the KaBOOM! community build model for the construction of a playground, the City decided to use this method exclusively for any future playgrounds built in Dothan. The community build model offers a great opportunity to involve neighborhoods, while saving significant costs on construction.

- **Indianapolis, Ind. (pop. 795,458)**

The Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Department is conducting a study that would involve converting abandoned housing and vacant lots and turning them into urban mini parks. This project will require that city department resources are combined to increase green spaces and remove abandoned housing, identify clusters of abandoned houses and vacant lots, identify potential mini park spaces, and host public meetings that would solicit the surrounding neighborhoods' advice on the usage of these spaces.

QUALITY

- **Las Cruces, N.M. (pop. 86,268)**

Las Cruces Public Schools launched a free program called Recess Before Lunch in 2007 to examine what benefits could result. After implementing the program, moving recess before lunch led to a significant improvement in healthy eating habits for the students, a reduction in food waste, and better focus in the classroom after lunch.

- **San Francisco, Calif. (pop. 808,976)**

The San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council (SFNPC) developed a Playground Report Card which analyzes and rates playspaces in San Francisco. The Report Card gave letter grades to all the playgrounds, with the San Francisco Parks and Recreation department and SFNPC then taking action by bringing all the failing parks up to standard.

ACCESS

- **Ankeny, Iowa (pop. 42,000)**

As part of the Ankeny Comprehensive plan, the highest priority of Ankeny residents was to build a trail system within the community that connects to a regional trail system. The Ankeny to Woodward Trail Steering Committee secured a \$1.75 million Vision Iowa grant to develop the 20 miles of trail and construct one of the world's tallest and longest trail bridges with the project scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2009.

- **New York, N.Y. (pop. 8,310,212)**

The New York City Parks and Recreation Department will break ground and revamp 221 playgrounds that require improvement throughout the City, while also targeting underdeveloped destination parks for each borough in 2009. This City is also working toward the creation of a public plaza in every community in partnership with non-profit groups, particularly in neighborhoods that lack open space.

KaBOOM! also selected Greensboro for its dedication to play. The Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department is encouraging neighborhood groups to participate in park upgrades by attending neighborhood association meetings as a way to increase the number of Adopt-a-Park participants. The City is also promoting the Park Watch Program, which enlists citizens to keep a watchful eye on the parks and educates them on reporting procedures.

“Through the Playful City USA program, Greensboro serves as a role model to other communities across the country,” says Mayor Yvonne J. Johnson. “Other cities and towns will examine our initiatives and look to replicate them in their communities. This recognition is a true honor and all Greensboro residents can take pride in knowing that we are making a difference for our children.”

The KaBOOM! vision is to provide a great place to play within walking distance of every child. Playful City USA communities create best practices that enhance children's well-being by increasing the opportunity for play. “Our country is facing two monumental deficits: a lack of unstructured play among children and a lack of resources to address this very issue,” said Darell Hammond, KaBOOM! CEO and Co-founder. “Greensboro took a stand and determined that the future of their community—their children—deserve a commitment to the cause of play. This is an investment in the future, not an expenditure and cities and towns across the country can replicate initiatives from these Playful City USA communities so that they too can bring play back into the lives of their children.”

2009 Playful City USA Communities

Allentown, Pa.
*Ankeny, Iowa
Annapolis, Md.
#Arlington, Texas
*Atlanta, Ga.
Auburn, Wash.
Baldwin Park, Calif.
Bismarck, N.D.
#Bloomington, Ind.
#Brentwood, Calif.
Casa Grande, Ariz.
#Cerritos, Calif.
*Chandler, Ariz.
Columbia, Ill.
Columbus, Ohio
Commerce City, Colo.
#Coolidge, Ariz.
Coral Gables, Fla.
Corpus Christi, Texas
*Creedmoor, N.C.
#Danville, Va.
Delray Beach, Fla.
#DeRidder, La.
*Dothan, Ala.
Durham, N.C.
#Encinitas, Calif.
Euless, Texas
Evans, Colo.
#Findlay, Ohio
Fishers, Ind.
*Gilbert, Ariz.
#Grand Prairie, Texas
#Green River, Wyo.
*Greenbelt, Md.
Greensboro, N.C.
Greenville, N.C.
Hamilton, N.J.
#Henderson, Nevada
#Hernando, Miss.
Hilo, Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii
#Huntsville, Ala.
Indianapolis, Ind.
*Kenner, La.
*Kerman, Calif.
Killeen, Texas
#La Mesa, Calif.
*Lake Charles, La.
*Lake Worth, Fla.
#Landfall, Minn.
Laramie, Wyo.
Las Cruces, N.M.
#Lauderdale Lakes, Fla.
Laurel, Md.

*Longview, Wash.
#Mercer Island, Wash.
Mesa, Ariz.
Miami Lakes, Fla.
Missoula, Mont.
#Murray, Ky.
#Nampa, Idaho
*New Lenox, Ill.
New Port Richey, Fla.
*New Roads, La.
#New York City, N.Y.
Niagara Falls, N.Y.
*Norfolk, Va.
#Northglenn, Colo.
#Orlando, Fla.
#Palm Bay, Fla.
#Parkland, Fla.
*Phoenix, Ariz.
*Portsmouth, Ohio
Richmond, Ind.
#Riverside, Calif.
#Safety Harbor, Fla.
#St. Petersburg, Fla.
San Antonio, Texas
San Bernardino, Calif.
*San Francisco, Calif.
Sanford, N.C.
*Shirley, Mass.
*Spartanburg, S.C.
#Springdale, Ark.
Takoma Park, Md.
Tempe, Ariz.
Thornton, Colo.
*Tucson, Ariz.
#West Palm Beach, Fla.
Wichita, Kan.
#York, Pa.
#Yorkville, Ill.
*Yuma, Ariz.

* Three-time honoree

Two-time honoree

2009 Playful City USA Communities by State:

12: Florida

9: Arizona, California

6: Texas

5: North Carolina

4: Colorado, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland

3: Illinois, Ohio, Washington

2: Alabama, Hawaii, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wyoming

1: Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Carolina

Applications for 2010 Playful City USA recognition will be available beginning in the fall of 2009.

The KaBOOM! National Campaign for Play, including the Playful City USA program, is made possible via the support of the Omidyar Network.

About KaBOOM!:

KaBOOM! is a national non-profit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Since 1995, KaBOOM! has used its innovative community-build model to bring together business and community interests to construct more than 1,600 new playgrounds, skateparks, sports fields and ice rinks across North America. KaBOOM! also offers a variety of resources, including an online community, free online trainings, grants, publications and the KaBOOM! National Campaign for Play, which includes Playful City USA and Playmakers – a national network of individual advocates for play. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has offices in Chicago and San Mateo, Calif. For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.

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