

Making Play a Priority: Non-Profit Organization KaBOOM! Names Mount Holly Among 151 “Playful City USA” Communities

- Communities Fighting Play Deficit by Implementing Policies to Increase Play Opportunities for Children

Mt Holly has been named a 2011 Playful City USA community by non-profit KaBOOM!. Mt Holly was one of only 150 communities across the U.S. and one of six communities in North Carolina to earn this wonderful designation.

With only 1-in-5 children in the U.S. currently living within walking distance of a park or playground, 151 cities and towns, including Mount Holly, earned recognition from national non-profit KaBOOM! as 2011 Playful City USA communities for their efforts to increase play opportunities for children.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, play is important to healthy brain development and allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Today's children spend less time playing outside than any previous generations in part because only 20-percent live within walking distance of a park or playground. This Play Deficit is having profound consequences for kids physically as well as mentally and socially because children need a place to play every day in order to be active and healthy.

A key platform in combating the Play Deficit is Playful City USA, a national program advocating for local policies that increase play opportunities for children. KaBOOM!, the national non-profit organization dedicated to saving play, created Playful City USA in 2007 to help local governments address the Play Deficit by ensuring their children have the time and space they need to play.

Hailing from 38 states and one territory, the 151 Playful City USA honorees range in size from five-time honorees such as Atlanta and San Francisco to first-time recipient Gypsum, Colo. (population: 4,000). These Playful City USA communities are making a commitment to play and physical activity by developing unique local action plans to increase the quantity and quality of play in their community. In doing so, some of the most innovative concepts and cost-effective programs are being developed in Playful City USA communities.

KaBOOM! also selected Mount Holly for its outstanding dedication to play. Mount Holly plans to improve and expand a number of its playspaces. The school district installed a new playground at a local elementary school and the city will improve the equipment at two neighborhood parks to make the play areas more engaging for the kids.

The 151 Playful City USA communities are now eligible for grants via Let's Play - a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids active nationwide. The first Let's Play initiative is a \$15 million, three-year commitment to KaBOOM!. Together, through Let's Play, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and KaBOOM! will build or fix up 2,000 playgrounds by the end of 2013, benefiting an estimated five million children across North America.