



# CITY OF TUCSON



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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **TUCSON HONORED AS 2017 PLAYFUL CITY USA COMMUNITY**

*258 cities and towns recognized for putting the needs of kids and families first as part of Playful City USA program*

Tucson is being honored with a 2017 Playful City USA designation for the 11<sup>th</sup> time. Tucson was one of 31 cities honored in 2007, the inaugural year. Playful City USA honors cities and towns across the country for putting the needs of families first so kids can learn, grow, and develop important life skills.

These communities are transforming ordinary places into playful spaces and using play as a solution to the challenges facing their residents. The 2017 Playful City USA recognition includes 258 communities from Richmond, Virginia to Richmond, California that make it as easy as possible for kids to play. In total, these communities feature more than 14,000 safe and engaging play spaces that serve more than 4 million kids.

The City of Tucson provides play through many initiatives. In August 2014, the City launched a new Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program operated by the Living Streets Alliance (LSA). Safe Routes to School programs encourage daily physical activity and the development of healthy habits in youth by promoting regular walking and biking to school. Walking and biking also reduces traffic congestion and pollution around schools, improves safety in school zones, and provides families and friends an opportunity to share time with each other and build connections in their community.

The nonprofit LSA was one of the 50 applicants to be funded for the Play Everywhere Challenge. For the past two years LSA has worked with Pueblo Gardens School through its Safe Routes to School Tucson program in partnership with the City of Tucson, encouraging youth and families to bike and walk through activities and events throughout the school year. By winning this challenge, they transformed Pueblo Gardens neighborhood into "Playful Gardens" by creating an interactive, fun corridor along Menor Street which connects families to Pueblo Gardens Elementary school, the Boys and Girls Club, and Pueblo Gardens Park.

In addition, the Parks and Recreation department, in partnership with the American Red Cross Aquatics Centennial Program, offers \$2 summer swim lessons for ages 6 months to 17 years to those who qualify for the Discount Program. The City of Tucson is also offering a SummerGO pass, in cooperation with SunTran, for kids ages 6-18 this summer that will allow youth to purchase a summer bus pass for only \$45. They will be able to take the bus anywhere SunTran and Sun Link routes go, and they will get free entrance into any City of Tucson pool and receive vouchers for free ice cream. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation department will be eliminating youth entrance fees at pools and for open recreation at Donna Liggins, Freedom, Oury, Quicny Douglas, and Santa Rosa Recreation Centers.

*If participants require an accommodation or materials in accessible format or require a foreign language interpreter or materials in a language other than English for any event, please call Tucson Parks and Recreation, 791-4873, at least five business days in advance*



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As cities are becoming hotbeds for innovation, communities across the country are creating inventive ways to attract and retain residents. Playful City USA honorees are taking bold action to ensure kids have great places to play – all with the ultimate goal of making play the easy choice for all kids, no matter where they live. In addition to the playground down the street, Playful City USA communities are turning grocery stores, vacant lots, crosswalks and sidewalks into opportunities for play.

“We are thrilled to recognize Tucson for putting kids first,” said KaBOOM! CEO James Siegal. “The well-being of our communities starts with the well-being of our kids, and play is critical for them to thrive. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all kids get the childhood they deserve filled with play.”

To see the full list of Playful City USA communities and to learn more about making play the easy choice for kids, visit [kaboom.org/playfulcityusa](http://kaboom.org/playfulcityusa). You can also take part in the conversation with leaders across the country using [#PLAYceforkids](https://twitter.com/PLAYceforkids) on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/PLAYceforkids) and [Facebook](https://facebook.com/PLAYceforkids).

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