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TUCSON SEVEN TIME HONOREE AMONG 217 “PLAYFUL CITY USA” COMMUNITIES

- Communities Recognized for Prioritizing Play for Children -

With research proving play is critical to the overall well-being of children, 217 cities and towns, including Tucson, earned recognition from national non-profit KaBOOM! as 2013 Playful City USA communities for their efforts to give children the childhood they deserve by providing ample opportunities for play. Tucson is a seven-time recipient of this award, which was announced on Tuesday, May 7.

Today’s generation of children play less than any previous generation despite the vast benefits of play. The *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* reports that play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of children.

Sponsored by the Humana Foundation, Playful City USA is a national program from KaBOOM! that celebrates and promotes local policies that increase play opportunities for children and is a key platform in combating the lack of play among children.

KaBOOM!, the national non-profit organization dedicated to giving kids the childhood they deserve by bringing play to those who need it most, created Playful City USA in 2007 to help local governments address the lack of play and it is through mayors, city council members, parks and recreation departments, school districts and community leaders that the program succeeds in benefitting children.

“Kids need to play actively, every day, at home, in school and in their communities, yet play is disappearing,” said Darell Hammond, Founder and CEO of KaBOOM! and author of *The New York Times* Best Seller [KaBOOM!: A Movement to Save Play](#). “Children spend nearly eight hours a day in front of a screen; almost half of all poor students are deprived of recess; and to make matters worse, only one in five children live within walking distance of a park. Playful City USA communities like Tucson are creating innovative programs and initiatives and deserve recognition because of their efforts to give kids the childhood they deserve and best prepare them for their future.”

- Each of the 2013 Playful City USA communities demonstrated creative commitments to addressing the lack of play among children. Playful City USA celebrates and highlights these unique initiatives developed by communities across
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- the country. A primary goal of Playful City USA is to encourage cities and towns to share ideas, concepts and programs in an effort to increase play opportunities for children.

KaBOOM! selected Tucson for its outstanding dedication to play. More than 10,000 guests attended the seventh annual Tucson Parks and Recreation Department's Family Festival in the Park in November 2012 with activities including free all-day admission to the zoo, free zoo train rides, a kid zone area and Tucson city golf. The city offers more access to play through a joint use agreement between the city and schools that keeps parks open to children outside of school hours.

The 217 Playful City USA communities are now eligible for \$15,000, \$20,000 and \$30,000 grants via Let's Play, a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids and families active nationwide. Grant recipients will be announced in the fall.

For more information on the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, including Let's Play grants and applications for 2014, visit www.playfulcityusa.org.

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