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

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

WASHINGTON, D.C. – 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 The Colony, 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.

“We are excited to be one of only nine cities in the State of Texas that was chosen to receive this honor. The Playful City USA designation reflects the value and commitment our city leadership places on ensuring multiple opportunities for active lifestyles exist in our city. A playful community is a healthy community, and we want people to know that The Colony is one of the best places in the country in which to live, work and play!” stated Pam Nelson, The Colony Community Services Director.

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..

Each of the 2011 Playful City USA communities demonstrated creative commitments to addressing the Play Deficit. Playful City USA celebrates and highlights these unique initiatives developed by communities across the country. KaBOOM! has selected The Colony for its outstanding dedication to play. The Colony performed a detailed assessment of all playspaces to review the current amenities and make plans for future improvements. The city hopes to encourage people to venture out and participate in a new initiative called PlayTC! Throughout the month of September, a wide variety of free or low cost activities will be offered that will give people of all ages the opportunity for new ways to get out and play. A complete listing of these activities can be found at www.PlayTC.com .

“The Play Deficit continues to harm our children and stifle their mental and physical development, while directly facilitating the ongoing childhood obesity crisis,” said Darell Hammond, KaBOOM! Founder and CEO and

author of *The New York Times* Best Seller [KaBOOM!: How One Man Built a Movement to Save Play](#). “These 151 Playful City USA communities have joined KaBOOM! in making a collective statement that we will no longer accept the misconception that play is a luxury when the reality is that play is an absolute necessity for children. The Colony is committed to the well-being of children and serves as an outstanding role model for the rest of America as we continue to strive toward the KaBOOM! vision of a great place to play within walking distance of every child.”

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.

For more information on the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, including Let’s Play grants and applications for 2012, visit www.kaboom.org/playfulcityusa.

2011 Texas Playful City USA Communities

Alamo, Texas
Alvin, Texas
Arlington, Texas
Grand Prairie, Texas
Killeen, Texas
McAllen, Texas
Rowlett, Texas
San Antonio, Texas
The Colony, Texas!!