

NATIONAL NON-PROFIT KaBOOM! DISPERSES \$100,000 IN GRANTS VIA INNOVATIVE ONLINE AWARDS SHOW *Atlanta, East Cleveland, Longview (Wash.) are awarded \$25,000 grants to fund play-related projects*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – KaBOOM!, the leading national non-profit promoting play as essential to the healthy development of all children, announced the grant recipients from the nation's founding class of Playful City USA communities on Tuesday.

Via a fun-filled online awards show that aired at 1 p.m. (EST) – the Playful City USA Grant Awards – KaBOOM! announced the communities receiving a total of \$100,000 in grants. Atlanta, East Cleveland and Longview (Wash.) each received “Golden Kazoos” and a \$25,000 grant that will be used to fund a play-related project in their communities.

In addition, Ankeny (Iowa), Norfolk (Va.), San Francisco, Shirley (Mass.) and Yuma (Ariz.) claimed “Honorary Mention Golden Kazoos” and \$5,000 grants that will be used toward each of the communities' 2008 Play Day.

Twenty-one of the nation's founding Playful City USA communities were vying for \$100,000 in grants (three \$25,000, five \$5,000) and each enthusiastically rallied its citizens to support the cause for play as part of the KaBOOM! Playful City USA national recognition program. Every community created fun-filled videos as part of the application process and the videos were collectively viewed more than 150,000 times.

“We're extremely excited to announce the communities that are receiving grants,” KaBOOM! CEO and co-founder Darell Hammond said. “I can't begin to describe the amount of hard work that all of our founding Playful City USA communities have shown us – not only to be named a Playful City USA, but also to apply for the grants. It was a challenging process, but it's quite encouraging because we know there are communities across the country that are willing to take action on behalf of play.”

The awards were named “The Golden Kazoos” as the kazoo is the official musical instrument at KaBOOM! because children play it better than adults.

On Oct. 30, KaBOOM! announced the 31 founding Playful City USA communities in America after each fulfilled five commitments laid out in the program: creating a local play board, task force, or commission; designing an annual action plan for play; conducting a playspace audit; outlining the financial investment in play for the current fiscal year; and proclaiming and celebrating an annual “play day.”

The cities were officially recognized as the nation's founding Playful City USA communities in front of representatives from across the country during the National League of Cities conference in New Orleans, La., Nov. 17-19.

Following the announcement, the communities were given the option of applying for grants by submitting a play-themed, fun-filled video and a detailed plan for how the grant award would be used.

The videos were viewed more than 150,000 times by individuals across the country who voted for their favorite videos from Nov. 30-Dec. 21. A judging panel then determined the eventual winners with strong consideration given to communities that successfully rallied their citizens to vote.

The KaBOOM! Playful City USA Grant Awards Show and the videos submitted by the communities can still be viewed at www.playfulcityusa.org/grant.

2007 Playful City USA Grant Awards Show List of Awards

Golden Kazoos (\$25,000 grant)

Atlanta, Ga.
East Cleveland, Ohio
Longview, Wash.

Honorary Mention Golden Kazoos (\$5,000 grant)

Ankeny, Iowa

Norfolk, Va.
San Francisco, Calif.
Shirley, Mass.
Yuma, Ariz.

Special Mention Golden Kazoos

Best Dramatic Performance By a Child: Canton, Ga.
Best Music: Cedar City, Utah
Best Orchestra: Dothan, Ala.
Best Belly Dancing: El Paso, Texas
Best Movie Reel: Lake Charles, La.
Best Collective Footwork: Lake Worth, Fla.
Best Swinging: New Lenox, Ill.
Best Performance By a Mayor: New Roads, La.
Best Comedic Performance: Phoenix, Ariz.
Best Stunt: Portsmouth, Ohio
Best Chorus: Spartanburg, S.C.
Best Hook: Tucson, Ariz.
Best Tumbling: Wapello, Iowa

2007 KaBOOM! Playful City USA communities

*Ankeny, Iowa
*Atlanta, Ga.
*Canton, Ga.
*Cedar City, Utah
Chandler, Ariz.
Creedmoor, N.C.
*Dothan, Ala.
*East Cleveland, Ohio
*El Paso, Texas
Gilbert, Ariz.
Greenbelt Md.
Jamestown, N.Y.
Kenner, La.
Kerman, Calif.
Kingsburg, Calif.
*Lake Charles, La.
*Lake Worth, Fla.
*Longview, Wash.
Mountain Grove, Mo.
*New Lenox, Ill.
*New Roads, La.
*Norfolk, Va.
*Phoenix, Ariz.
*Portsmouth, Ohio
*San Francisco, Calif.
San Jose, Calif.
*Shirley, Mass.
*Spartanburg, S.C.
*Tucson, Ariz.
*Wapello, Iowa
*Yuma, Ariz.

* Applied for grant

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 1,300 new playgrounds, skateparks, sports fields and ice rinks across North America. KaBOOM! also offers a variety of resources, including an online community, regional and national trainings, grants, publications and the KaBOOM! National Campaign for Play, which includes Playful City USA and the Playmaker Network – a national network of individual advocates for play. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has offices in Chicago, Atlanta and San Mateo, CA. For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.

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