



Palm Bay Honored as 2017 Playful City USA Community

PALM BAY, Fla. - National non-profit KaBOOM! is honoring Palm Bay, Florida with a 2017 Playful City USA designation for the 10th straight 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 playspaces that serve more than 4 million kids.

Over the past year, the Palm Bay Parks & Recreation Department has been busy renovating and upgrading many of their facilities. The Captains House at Goode Park was completely remodeled. A new weight room, gym floor, bleachers, and electronic sign have been added to the Tony Rosa Community Center. Several facilities have been given a fresh coat of paint including West Oaks Park and Knecht Park.

The city also hosted several community events including an Independence Day celebration enjoyed by 20,000+ people, a Holiday Parade, and free monthly live concerts. Palm Bay Mayor William Capote recently participated in the Mayors' Fitness Challenge. He also hosted a Move with the Mayor Day at the Ted Whitlock Community Center where residents were invited to enjoy a warm-up walk with the mayor and try out Zumba and other exercise classes. There was also basketball, pickleball, vendors, and healthy food to sample.

"Here in Palm Bay we work to provide ample opportunity for people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors and maintain an active lifestyle," said Mayor Capote. "I am so proud of our Parks and Recreation team for continuing to find new and interesting ways to make active living part of our culture here."

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 Palm Bay 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. You can also take part in the conversation with leaders across the country using #PLAYceforkids on Twitter and Facebook