

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KaBOOM! and Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Announce Play Everywhere Challenge Winners to Create More Play Opportunities for Kids

As a part of the Built to Play Initiative, \$1 Million in grants are awarded across Western New York and Southeast Michigan for creative ideas that incorporate play into everyday life in unexpected places

WASHINGTON D.C. (August 14, 2018) —

Today, KaBOOM!, the national non-profit dedicated to giving all kids the childhood they deserve through great, safe places to play, and the *Built to Play Initiative*, supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation announced winners of the Play Everywhere Challenge. The Challenge awards 23 grantees a total of \$1 million across Western New York and Southeast Michigan to create lasting, scalable design installations that will provide more opportunities to play for the kids who need it most.

The Play Everywhere Challenge is a call for innovative design ideas that make it easier for families to incorporate play into their everyday routines. Selected grantees submitted ideas to help communities reimagine public spaces and provide innovative opportunities for kids to play along the way – such as implementing swings at bus stops or play zones at laundromats.

Examples of playful projects coming to these areas include:

- A warm-weather sledding installation called **Palmer Coast** complete with ramps and various types of sleds located at Palmer Park in Port Huron, MI that will provide kids and families with a fun activity in warmer months
- An installation called **Links and Crosses** bringing an 18-hole public art nano-sized golf course in Erie County, NY
- A soccer installation in Dearborn, MI called **Play it Forward 'n Graham Soccer Park!** featuring soccer obstacle courts, crocheted hoops, and climbing structures
- A one-mile loop called **Voyage of Discovery – Adventure Loop Trail** complete with graphic art design and outdoor instruments in West Buffalo, NY

The *Built to Play Initiative* answers a need identified through the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's work with the Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program on each region's "State of Play" assessment, and through research conducted by and KaBOOM!, which shows that while play is an essential factor in childhood development, there are far too many kids who lack opportunities for great, safe spaces to play – especially in rural and low-income neighborhoods.

"Play is an essential part of childhood, and all kids should have opportunities to play regardless of where they live or their family's income," said James Siegal, CEO of KaBOOM!. "The more kids play, the more likely they are able to grow up happy, healthy and resilient. We are grateful to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for opening the doors for all kids to have the childhood they deserve through play."

The projects implemented through the Play Everywhere Challenge will help families make play the easy choice and support kids in getting the physical activity they need to thrive.

"While sports can be a great way for kids to be physically active, there's also a strong need for kids to have more unstructured 'free play' in their daily lives," said Jim Boyle, vice president of programs & communications, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. "We can't wait to see these well-designed and creative playspaces get built by communities across Southeast Michigan and Western New York for all kids to enjoy."

Through the Play Everywhere Challenge and the creation of unique playgrounds this year, the *Built to Play Initiative* will create more than 27 new playspaces that reach thousands of kids in Western New York and Southeast Michigan by September 2019.

Learn more about the Play Everywhere Challenge and view a gallery of grant winners from across Western New York and Southeast Michigan.

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About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his Buffalo Bills franchise. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson requested that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. The Foundation has a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires

January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit www.rcwjrf.org.

About KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is the national non-profit dedicated to giving all kids – especially those living in poverty – the childhood they deserve through great, safe places to play. KaBOOM! inspires communities to make play the easy choice and works to drive the national discussion about the importance of PLAYces. KaBOOM! has collaborated with partners to build or restore more than 17,000 playspaces, engaged more than 1.5 million volunteers and served over 9 million kids. To learn why play matters for all kids, visit kaboom.org and join the conversation at twitter.com/kaboom, facebook.com/kaboom, and instagram.com/kaboom. #playmatters #PLAYceforKids