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**KABOOM! and Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Announce
Play Everywhere Design Challenge to Bring Play to Everyday Spaces**

*Application now open for \$1 million to bring creative playspaces to communities
in Western New York and Southeast Michigan*

WASHINGTON D.C. (July 13, 2020) — Today, KABOOM!, the national non-profit working to end playspace inequity for good, and the *Built to Play Initiative*, supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, announced the launch of the Play Everywhere Design Challenge. The Challenge, now in its third iteration, invites communities to submit creative design ideas that make it easier for families to incorporate play into everyday moments. Selected projects will bring play into public spaces in unconventional ways – such as swings at bus stops or play zones at laundromats – in neighborhoods that have experienced significant disinvestment.

Applications are now open for community groups and public agencies to receive a total of \$1 million to create unique play installations in everyday locations across Western New York and Southeast Michigan in order to address disparities in access to quality playspaces. Interested groups can view full eligibility requirements and submit a brief Idea Form, the first step in the application process, at <https://kaboom.org/grants/play-everywhere-design-challenge>. The deadline to submit an Idea Form is September 11, 2020. Winning projects will be implemented over a 12-month period ending January 31, 2022.

As communities begin the process of reopening following stay-at-home orders related to COVID-19, the need for flexible play options is more apparent now than ever before, especially because black and brown communities and low-wealth communities that have been hardest hit by the pandemic have often been overlooked when it comes to

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investment in critical community infrastructure like places to play. Play Everywhere Design Challenge winners will be uniquely positioned to respond to shifting local needs and public health realities. Communities can customize the design of their project to ensure they meet local guidelines, from location and materials to how kids interact with each installation. Activities like site activation events, installation procedures, and community engagement protocols are also highly adaptable.

Applicants will also have the unique opportunity to team up with design experts to support the development and potential execution of their concept. Applicants can partner with designers they already know or get matched up with an expert designer hand-selected by KABOOM!.

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 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 neighborhoods facing economic hardship and the added trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Play Everywhere installations are so exciting because they bring the magic of the playground into everyday spaces where kids and families are already spending a lot of time,” said James Siegal, CEO of KABOOM!. “These spaces are essential to help kids learn, connect and grow, especially in communities experiencing disinvestment. We thank the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for their partnership and support in ensuring every kid can access a great, safe place to play.”

According to the National Survey of Children’s Health, only 24% of youth ages 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30% a decade earlier. The Challenge aims to address this need by sparking innovative playspaces that provide kids with equitable opportunities for active play.

“The way kids play, and ultimately, the way we engage as a community has changed,” said Jim Boyle, Vice President of Programs and Communications at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. “Now more than ever we have to find creative ways to keep youth active, engaged and safe, while following local guidelines.”

To date, the Challenge has awarded \$2 million in grant dollars to 44 Community Partners across Southeast Michigan and Western New York.

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About Built to Play

The Built to Play initiative aims to give kids in Western New York and Southeast Michigan more opportunities for unstructured, kid-driven free play. This need was identified in the regional ["State of Play" reports](#) conducted by the Aspen Institute and supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, and through research conducted by both The Skatepark Project (formerly known as the Tony Hawk Foundation) and KABOOM!.

In addition to the Play Everywhere Challenge, *Built to Play* is also funding Unique Playground Builds through KABOOM! and Community Skateparks through The Skatepark Project across both regions. Learn more about the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and these opportunities by visiting <http://www.rwbuilttoplay.org/>.

About KABOOM!

KABOOM! is the national non-profit that works to achieve playspace equity. Kids who don't have access to play miss out on childhood and are denied critical opportunities to build physical, social and emotional health. And all too often, it more deeply affects communities of color. So we amplify the power of communities to build inspiring playspaces that spark unlimited opportunities for every kid, everywhere. KABOOM! has teamed up with partners to build or improve 17,000+ playspaces, engage more than 1.5 million community members and bring joy to more than 11 million kids.

To learn about our goal to end playspace inequity for good, visit kaboom.org and join the conversation at twitter.com/kaboom, facebook.com/kaboom and instagram.com/kaboom

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