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Wanted: 100,000 places to play

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Enlarge KaBOOM!

Andy Amaya plays on the playground at Gabriella Charter School in Los Angeles.

By Jeanette Der Bedrosian, USA TODAY

Play is serious business for KaBOOM!, a national non-profit aimed at locating and funding play spaces. The organization has launched a campaign to locate 100,000 play spaces — playgrounds, skate parks and field complexes — in 100 days in an effort to ensure there is a play space within walking distance of every child.

Through its online play space locator, KaBOOM! is asking parents, teachers and community leaders to enter and rate their local play spaces. For every play space entered, \$1 will be donated to charity in the name of country music singer and two-time *Dancing With the Stars* winner Julianne Hough. The result will help parents locate the best play spaces in their area and provide an honest analysis to community leaders of whether they have enough quality play spaces, says CEO Darell Hammond.

EXPERTS: Kids' loss of recess, play bemoaned
BETTER LIFE: Kids' lack of play time may affect development
ON THE WEB: Find and rate playspaces near you at KaBOOM.org

"KaBOOM! cannot build every play space that's out there or raise enough money to do so, but we can put the information out there and help people understand where the areas of issue are," Hammond says.

The organization has teamed up with six non-profit partners to spread the word, Hammond says. The group is using interactive Google maps and social network Twitter to make entries easier.

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"If a parent is out there at a playground, they can grab their iPhone or their Blackberry and 'tweet-pic' a photo of the play space to a non-profit partner," Hammond says. Hammond is referring to a Twitter feature that enables camera phone users to quickly post photos.

KaBOOM! helped the city of Tucson recognize a problem with the locations of the city's play spaces, Hammond says. After applying for the non-profit's designation as a Playful City USA, a playground audit of Tucson revealed many of the lower-income areas didn't have sufficient play spaces. As a result, Hammond says, the city has taken steps to open school playgrounds to the public on weekends.

"We want them to improve access, improve quality and improve quantity," Hammond says. "Having a sense of urgency in a short period of time is motivating people to participate locally but also to understand the ramifications nationally. "


KaBOOM!'s campaign started March 23 and runs through June 30, or until 100,000 new play spaces are entered on the site. The organization is partners with YMCA of the USA, the National Wildlife Federation, Shaping America's Health, Jumpstart, America's Promise Alliance and First Book. As of

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Friday, the database had reached 4,000 new entries.

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fab4fan (3 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 4d 17h ago

FrankL183 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 7h ago

fab4fan (3 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13h 56m ago

None in 08 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2h ago

Great idea? Sure, especially given the current state of children's health in this country. But it won't last once the lawyers get involved.

You're very right. All it's going to take is one kid to fall and get seriously hurt on a school-owned playground and that'll be the end of those playgrounds being open on weekends.

This sounds like the same moronic school board in my town. The parents paid for one of these modern plastic play spaces, one kid breaks his arm and the next thing they do is cut 3 feet off the legs. Now the slide is just a horizontal trough that collects rainwater. Kids, especially boys want excitement and danger when they play. We adults are to blame, all the safety rules make everything boring, so why would a kid go out and play.

Makes me miss the old days of those tall metal slides that used to burn your butt during the summer, jungle gyms that had nothing beneath them except a nice cushy layer of asphalt, see-saws (haven't seen a non-spring-loaded one in ages on any playground), etc. I got my share of scrapes and bruises at play, and I survived!

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JimMcDosh (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 5d 20h ago

All teens want to do now days is a. sit in front of the TV, b. sit on the comp0uter and AIM or c. lay in bed and freaking text all day. Take ALL that garbage away and FORCE them out to play!

RT

www.anon-tools.at.tc

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lap1 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d ago

the cool thing about the playgrounds KaBOOM! builds is that volunteers build them. i've been a volunteer on one of their projects and its awesome. you get there in the a.m. and build the whole thing in just one day. (they have a pro check to double check that the whole thing is built safely at the end of the day, just in case). and because the neighborhood built it, they take care of it too - graffiti is cleaned up, its safe. very cool. highly recommend people try to volunteer on one of these projects.

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FrankL183 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 1h ago

fab4fan (3 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13h 56m ago

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madthoughts (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 4h ago

From bigmakr7:

you could build playgrounds on every corner. They still would be empty. Problem is, these fat obese kids nowadays entertain themselves by playing on computers, and video games.

Today's modern video games are immersive, innovative, challenging, and exciting. Today's playground are not.

Slowly but surely you are seeing design and though being put back in to playground design. One end of the spectrum, you see electronics and technology and on the other you see a return to grass, sand, and water.

Kids will show up if its fun. If you had Grand Theft Auto when you were a kid would you really have hung out at the jungle gym?

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The Mick (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 5h ago

There are enough playgrounds, county and Baltimore city playgrounds and state parks with short hiking trails that include chrome ore samples or a beach with fossilized sharks' teeth within one hour's drive of home for me to entertain kids in the family when I watch them. The problem is for those who kids don't have access to such places or whose parents don't sign them up for soccer, baseball, etc. To have one that's safe and close to home with a staffed rec. center is tough in today's broke USA.

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Factoid (6 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 5h ago

Great start. Any investment in children is just great for us as a people and our country. Give it to them so they may have a future.

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jacalder (3 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 12h ago

Please, no more skate parks. Cities build them, then there's nothing but graffiti and gang problems. Nothing keeps kids from playing more than parks with gang problems.

Haven't there been a lot of articles in the news about how registration for Little League is down because parents can't afford the registration costs. Perhaps rather than building more places to play, organizations could help subsidize Little League and soccer registration costs. Once kids are past a certain age, they're not gonna just go play on the play ground. Organized sports are a good idea, but usually quite expensive to join.

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bigmark7 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 15h ago

the headline should read: Wanted: 100,000 kids to play!

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bigmark7 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6d 15h ago

you could build playgrounds on every corner. They still would be empty. Problem is, these fat obese kids nowadays entertain themselves by playing on computers, and video games. they get tired and replenish themselves with soda and junk food. they fry their brains in front of tv's, and monitors. just driveby your local park, and you probably asked yourself "where are all the kids"? When i was growing up the parks were too small. lots of kids everywhere. Now its only going to get worse! (ipods, phones, etc...) And also these helicopter parents, spoil the kids. The parents allow this brain frying because this is the modern day babysitter. Parents are too dam lazy to do productive things and spend quality time with kids. they dont have time to make dinner, take kids to burger king mcdonalds, etc.. and kids get obese and have no energy to play. so its back to the idiot box and parents support the modern day babysitters(video games, computers, ipods, etc..) this is reality

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