



## Volunteers to build OS playground

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### From Staff Reports

OCEAN SPRINGS -- Volunteers from the city, AmeriCares and KaBOOM! will build a new playground on Saturday in the Fort Bayou neighborhood.

The playground will be built in park space adjacent to the Ocean Springs Hospital, city leaders announced in a press release issued Sunday.

"We are thrilled to receive the generous donation from AmeriCares to fund a new KaBOOM! playground on the site donated to the city by the county," said Mayor Connie Moran. "Thanks to the involvement of the Ocean Springs Hospital and Jackson County, the Fort Bayou neighborhood of over 1,500 homes will have its first playground."

In early October, representatives from AmeriCares, the city and KaBOOM! hosted a Design Day so children could give input for the playground. The children's drawings were used to create the final playground design.

The playground's construction will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday. Sponsoring agencies will celebrate the new finished playground in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 3 p.m.

AmeriCares, a nonprofit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization, awarded more than \$8.6 million in grants to grassroots organizations in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas that are addressing the most pressing hurricane recovery issues.

Those issues include nutritional and medical needs, shelter, volunteer support, children's health and welfare and livelihood issues.

"We are delighted to be able to support this significant effort with KaBOOM! and the city of Ocean Springs," said Trish Tweedley, AmeriCares' vice president of hurricane recovery. "We believe that by giving Katrina's youngest survivors a safe place to play, their parents will have peace of mind, too. This project is one more step in revitalizing this strong community."

The playground is the last of three such projects to be built by KaBOOM! and AmeriCares in the Gulf Coast.

The first playground was completed in New Orleans in June and the second in D'Iberville in October. It is one of 100 playgrounds KaBOOM! is building through Operation Playground, a two-year initiative to build playgrounds in Gulf Coast communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"KaBOOM! is proud to be partners with AmeriCares and the city of Ocean Springs for our 27th Operation Playground project in the Gulf Coast," said Darell Hammond, CEO and co-founder of KaBOOM!. "It's nearly impossible for most of us to grasp the full extent of Hurricane Katrina's devastation and reach. We owe it to Gulf Coast children to give them a sense of normalcy and a chance to still be kids in the aftermath of the storm. For AmeriCares to commit their money and time to this project and for the city of Ocean Springs to make this a priority is incredible and we're honored to work with two such outstanding partners."

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