



KaBOOM! Marks 50th Operation Playground Build in New Orleans

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[WASHINGTON](#), May 16 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- On May 21, the students at Drew Elementary School in [New Orleans](#) will no longer have to call the broken asphalt behind the school their playground. Instead, they will be able to swing, jump and slide on a brightly colored, state-of-the-art custom playground built in just one day by more than 300 volunteers. The new playground is the 50th built in the Gulf Coast by the nonprofit organization KaBOOM! as part of its Operation Playground initiative to build 100 playgrounds in communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"KaBOOM! is committed to bringing play back to the Gulf Coast, one playground at a time. Every child deserves a place to run, jump, have fun and just be a kid. We are proud to reach this important milestone and we couldn't have done it without incredible support from our partners. There is so much more work to do, though, to ensure there is a great place to play within walking distance of every child in the Gulf Coast," said KaBOOM! CEO and co-founder Darell Hammond.

Since launching Operation Playground in December 2005, KaBOOM! has raised \$3.7M to build 50 playspaces in Gulf Coast communities, providing more than 17,500 Gulf Coast children with great places to play. To date, Operation Playground has mobilized over 25,000 volunteers from across the country. The first 50 Operation Playground projects have included the building of 10 playgrounds in four days with partners The Home Depot and Playworld Systems Inc. during the Hurricane Katrina Anniversary. This February, KaBOOM! partnered with [Fannie Mae](#) to build six playgrounds in one day at elementary schools across New Orleans. Other partners contributing assets for three or more playgrounds in the Gulf Coast include Jim Barksdale, [ING DIRECT](#) and AmeriCares.

Each KaBOOM! playground is designed by the children who will use it, planned by local residents and built entirely by volunteers. The playground at Drew Elementary School is being built at the behest of the popular daytime television show Live with Regis and Kelly, which initiated the project in conjunction with the show's visit to the area. Planning for the project began in March when students, parents and school staff met with organizers from KaBOOM! and representatives from the show to design their dream playground. Since then, a planning committee made up of teachers, parents and representatives from KaBOOM! and Live with Regis and Kelly have met weekly to plan the playground build as well as volunteer recruitment, site preparation and safety/logistics. The [hard work](#) will pay off on May 21 and for years to come as Drew Elementary students enjoy their new playground.

"We thank KaBOOM! for its initiative in rebuilding local playgrounds in New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast. KaBOOM! is helping to strengthen our New Orleans Recreation Department one playground at a time," said Mayor C. [Ray](#) Nagin. "Supporting the positive development of our youth is critical to our city's recovery."

KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Over the past decade, KaBOOM! has used its innovative community-build model to bring together business and community interests to construct more than 1,100 new playgrounds, skateparks, sports fields and ice rinks across [North America](#). KaBOOM! also offers a variety of resources, including a web site and [online community](#), regional and national trainings, grants and publications for communities that wish to plan a new playspace on their own. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has offices in [Chicago](#), Atlanta and San Mateo, CA. For more information, visit <http://www.kaboom.org/>.

Source: KaBOOM!

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