



2013 Annual Report

Play Matters for All Kids



KaBOOM! 2013 ANNUAL REPORT
Play Matters for All Kids

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LETTER FROM DARELL HAMMOND AND RON LUMBRA ***A Year of Transformation***

In 2013, KaBOOM! underwent a significant transformation. We went from being the best-in-class at building playgrounds to also being a catalyst for behavior change. We adopted a strategic extension of our mission, a bold new goal that all kids get the balanced and active play they need to thrive, especially the 16 million American kids growing up in poverty. We started engaging people in the cause of play—promoting it and protecting it—because to address a problem so large in scope, we knew we needed to move beyond infrastructure and actively influence people’s perceptions of the importance of play.

While research affirms that balanced and active play is essential to children’s physical health, emotional well-being, educational progress, and social development, today’s kids play less than any previous generation. Obesity rates and behavioral disorders are soaring, while important skills like creativity and resilience are suffering.

In order to help kids everywhere realize the promise of play, we recalibrated and redefined our mission and developed a comprehensive framework that now informs all of our outreach and influence. To effect widespread change in both individual behaviors and societal norms, we began executing an influence strategy through the diffusion of innovative ideas in ways that influence others to take action and get results.

We also continued our signature playground build work and led 165 builds and provided 776 community organizations with grants to maintain, improve, and create new playspaces. These combined efforts improved the lives of more than 860,000 children and engaged more than 51,000 volunteers.

In short, KaBOOM! made many changes during 2013. But the support of our National Partners has remained constant throughout. Thanks to the generous funding from our National and Signature Partners — including Dr Pepper Snapple Group, Foresters, Disney, MetLife Foundation, The CarMax Foundation, JetBlue Airways, Humana and Humana Foundation — along with all of our Partners in Play, we have helped to move the needle in the right direction.

During the years ahead, we will continue working to bring even more change to our cities and neighborhoods, schools and parks, and kids and families everywhere. And we hope you remain a part of it. Indeed, America’s young people are counting on you.

With appreciation for your partnership,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Darell Hammond".

Darell Hammond,
Founder and CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Lumbra".

Ron Lumbra,
Chairman of the Board

WHO WE ARE

Giving All Kids the Childhood They Deserve

KaBOOM! is a national non-profit dedicated to giving all kids the childhood they deserve, filled with balanced and active play, so they can thrive.

For almost two decades now, our mission has been to create great playspaces with Community Partners. That has not changed. But during 2013, KaBOOM! expanded our mission and adopted a bold new strategy: to catalyze and create great places to play, empower advocates to promote and protect play, and elevate public discourse around the importance of play.

We believe play matters for all kids, because all the science affirms that play is critical to a child's overall health, development and well-being. Moreover, play can help tackle a number of urgent issues plaguing our society—especially those endemic among low-income communities.

The problem is that America's kids are playing less than any previous generation. In part, this is because kids ages eight to 18 now spend almost half of their days in front of screens instead of engaging in active play.¹ Only one in four children gets 60 minutes of physical activity or active play every day.

As play has decreased, obesity rates and behavioral and cognitive disorders have increased. Childhood obesity has tripled in the last 30 years, and in 2011, the decline of play was linked to suicide rates that have quadrupled among teenagers under the age of 15, along with the rise of depression and anxiety in kids and young adults.² And, of course, schools without recess face more incidents of classroom behavioral problems, from kids' emotional outbursts to problems interacting with their peers and teachers.

But there is reason to be hopeful: the promise of play.

Kids who have play as part of their school day, do better in school, become better team players, and develop into more creative thinkers—and they are much more likely to carry these skills into adulthood.

The bottom line: Kids who play are happier, smarter, and more social creatures—as are their communities! They stand a stronger chance of developing into happy, healthy, smart, successful adults than kids who do not.

This is why KaBOOM! is dedicated to giving all kids the play they deserve by bringing together parents, advocates, and Community and National Partners to ensure that kids have the opportunity to play every day, everywhere.

¹ <http://s3.amazonaws.com/media-kaboom/docs/documents/pdf/Play-Deficit.pdf>

² <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/10/all-work-and-no-play-why-your-kids-are-more-anxious-depressed/246422/>

LOOKING BACK AT 2013

A Year of Progress and Play

To effectively address America's play deficit, we need to drive widespread change in both **individual behaviors**—so that children actually play more—and **societal norms**—so that society reinforces the expectation that children should play actively every day.

During 2013, KaBOOM! made progress toward this goal.

We created—and catalyzed others' work to create—great places to play. KaBOOM! led 165 playground builds, engaging 36,316 volunteers, who contributed 218,000 hours of service to communities in 37 states, the D.C., Puerto Rico, Canada, and Mexico—all to serve more than 303,000 children.

We provided 631 local, community organizations with a total of \$3,792,500 to assist with construction of 125 new playspaces, to maintain and improve 520 existing playspaces, and to help open 131 otherwise locked playgrounds for broader community use. These projects served an estimated 558,199 children and engaged 14,703 volunteers.

We also inspired and informed advocates for play at the policy-making, community-engagement, and individual levels.

At the policy-making level, KaBOOM! once again deployed our Playful City USA program, in which 217 communities qualified for Playful City USA status. These communities piloted best practices like joint-use agreements, where local governments open school playgrounds to public use, and regional growth plans, where governments mandate that new housing developments include play and recreational activities within walking distance for their residents.

We also hosted the inaugural Playful Cities USA Leaders' Summit, which included representatives from 53 cities, 30 states, and three countries. Nearly 200 participants engaged with an impressive list of speakers and presenters, including Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, journalist Cokie Roberts, author Walter Isaacson, and a dozen city mayors.

In addition, we forged a new partnership with Mattel and the Mattel Children's Foundation, which produced a synthesis of play-related research, "Play Matters: Giving kids the childhood they deserve."

Our Founder and CEO Darell Hammond, along with Bill Shore of Share Our Strength and Amy Celep of Community Wealth Partners, co-authored a *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article about why non-profit organizations should shift their attention from modest goals of short-term relief to bold goals that provide long-term solutions.

At the community-engagement level, KaBOOM! enabled communities to assess where play is needed most by re-launching our national Map of Play with a new website, mapofplay.org. More than 125,183 playspaces are now mapped across the United States. Key demographic data will be layered into the KaBOOM! Map of Play to provide a comprehensive Play Desert map, illuminating child-rich, playspace-poor areas, allowing for more strategic use of resources in addressing the play deficit.

At the individual level, KaBOOM! promoted the cause of play online. We provided free webinars and action guides that educate visitors about the importance of play, inspire them to join the cause, and empower them to take action. During 2013, nearly 1,843 people were trained using KaBOOM! online resources.

Finally, once communities and individuals have helped construct playgrounds through our community-build model, they can register as KaBOOM! Alumni and access special grant programs, maintenance tips, and other support as they move along the path as a Playmaker ensuring that all children in their community get the balanced and active play that they need to thrive!

We are proud of our progress this year—and grateful for the support of our partners. Together, we have helped thousands of playgrounds come to life, become a go-to resource for the cause of play, and changed the national conversation at every level.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

Making Play Possible

There is no other way to put it: Without the support of our partners, our work would not be possible.

At KaBOOM!, you can be a Partner in Play in many ways. Whether you are a National, Signature, or Funding Partner, you have helped make play a possibility for millions of children across the country. KaBOOM! is proud to recognize and thank the following partners, each of whom has supported and contributed to the cause of play:

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Through collaborations with our National Partners, KaBOOM! is able to deliver more playgrounds to deserving communities and further our mission through unrestricted funding. Through their support we are able to raise awareness about the cause of play, build a greater understanding about the importance of play, and promote action to create play.

Dr Pepper Snapple Group*

Dr Pepper Snapple Group (DPS) has been a KaBOOM! National Partner since 2011. In 2013, through the Let's Play initiative, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and KaBOOM! exceeded our goal to build, open or improve 2,000 playgrounds nationwide, benefitting an estimated 5 million children. Launched in 2011, Let's Play is a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple to get kids and families active by providing the tools, places and inspiration to make play a daily priority. In 2013 alone, DPS and KaBOOM! awarded 742 grants to build, open, improve and maintain new and existing playgrounds and engaged local DPS employee teams on the construction of 11 new playgrounds.

Foresters*

Since the partnership began in 2006, founding National Partner Foresters, has invested over \$10 million with KaBOOM! to build almost 120 playgrounds in communities across North America by the end of 2015. In addition to building playgrounds with KaBOOM!, Foresters provides long-term guidance and support for KaBOOM! by investing in programs that have a lasting impact on the well-being of families.

Foresters is an international financial services provider that is member-based, family-focused and community-spirited. This means that Foresters is driven to share, not shareholder driven. Foresters is an organization with a purpose to champion the well-being of families.

Disney

Disney is a KaBOOM! National Partner, and supports the KaBOOM! vision of helping all children get the play that they need. Since 2007, Disney has pledged more than \$8 million to help build more than 40 playgrounds and give away 30 Imagination Playground sets. The playground builds are an extension of Disney's Magic of Healthy Living, an initiative designed to help parents to raise healthy, happy kids and make healthier lifestyles fun. In addition to building playgrounds, Disney has been a sponsor of the KaBOOM! Map of Play, a tool to gather data on where playspaces exist, the condition of existing playspaces, and where playspaces are needed. We have engaged many business units in playground builds, including Walt Disney World Resorts, Disneyland, ABC, ESPN, Disney Cruiseline, Club Penguin, and Aulani Resort in Hawaii.

JetBlue

In the air and on the ground, JetBlue is committed to bettering the lives of their customers, crewmembers and the communities they serve while inspiring others to do the same. JetBlue works hand-in-hand with local and national organizations to foster influential programs and connect communities within the areas of commitment: Youth & Education, Community and the Environment. Through their long-standing partnership with KaBOOM!, JetBlue a partner since 2006 and a National Partner since 2011, has built new play spaces in underserved neighborhoods across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. From 2006-2014, more than 4,512 crewmembers and customer volunteers will have created 20 playgrounds to provide more than 44,000 children with safe places to play. Additionally, KaBOOM! was a charitable beneficiary of JetBlue's annual fundraising event – the Swing For Good Golf Classic – from 2009-2013.

[Learn more about JetBlue's Corporate Social Responsibility efforts.](#)

MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation has a longstanding commitment to empowering individuals and building healthy communities. MetLife Foundation has been a supporter of KaBOOM! since 2008. At the end of 2013 KaBOOM!, MetLife Foundation, and Snoopy had built 19 playgrounds in the U.S. and Mexico. MetLife Foundation also raised awareness for KaBOOM! at the 2012 and 2013 MetLife Bowl where KaBOOM! was featured as the charitable partner for the New York Giants.

The CarMax Foundation

The CarMax Foundation is a KaBOOM! National Partner and proud sponsor of the KaBOOM! Map of Play project helping to identify Play Deserts – areas that have lots of kids, but not enough places to play. The Foundation recognizes the important role of play in giving children the opportunity to increase physical activity and develop positive social interaction skills; its goal is to impact 100,000 underserved children and families by the end of 2015. CarMax Associates and The Foundation have demonstrated their commitment to the cause of play by helping to identify Play Deserts, pledging to build 30 playgrounds, and awarding 11 Imagination Playground sets to deserving communities across the nation.

**Dr Pepper Snapple Group and Foresters are members of the KaBOOM! Corporate Leadership Circle.*

SIGNATURE PARTNERS

Our Signature Partners enable KaBOOM! to further our efforts to bring play to underserved communities as well as promote municipal leaders to invest in the infrastructure, policies, and programs that promote healthy lives and healthy communities.

Humana

Humana Inc., headquartered in Louisville, Ky., is a leading health and well-being company that is focused on making it easier for people to achieve their best health by serving as their health partner for life. Humana's corporate social responsibility platform focuses on promoting Healthy People, a Healthy Planet, and Healthy Performance. Because of their CSR approach and our shared objectives, Humana has been a Signature Partner of KaBOOM! since 2011, building multi-generational playgrounds to provide great places for children, adults, and seniors to be active. In 2013, Humana and KaBOOM! built nine multi-generational spaces, including traditional playgrounds, adult fitness equipment, and walking paths.

Humana Foundation

Humana's philanthropic arm, the Humana Foundation, is also a KaBOOM! Signature Partner furthering its vision to promote healthy behaviors and relationships among children and adults. To help achieve its vision, the foundation built five multi-generational playgrounds with community gardens in 2013 and served as the primary sponsor of the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program to recognize cities nationwide that prioritize play by providing vibrant spaces for healthy activity. In addition, the Humana Foundation sponsored the inaugural Playful City USA Leaders' Summit. The summit featured representatives from 53 cities, 30 states, and three countries who actively discussed the important role of municipalities to ensure all children receive the active play they need to thrive.

MILESTONE PARTNER

KaBOOM! is proud to recognize the Health Care Service Corporation as a Milestone Partner for having made the cause of play an ongoing commitment as an organization and demonstrating its dedication to improve the health and wellness of children through play.

Health Care Service Corporation

Since 2009, Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC) and KaBOOM! have built 39 playgrounds, created creative playspaces in nine communities with Imagination Playground, and have increased playground time year-long by adding shade structures in nine cities. These efforts have helped advance HCSC's *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families*® mission, to improve the health and wellness of children in our communities through community investments by HCSC and its Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Illinois, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Originally a three-year initiative with the goal of reaching one million children, HCSC's *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families*® program reached more than 6.7 million children in less than three years and is now an ongoing community commitment of the organization.

FUNDING PARTNERS

The work we do at KaBOOM! is made possible through the generous donations of our funding partners who are committed to the cause of play. Through their support we are able to map and build playspaces in addition to raise awareness about why play matters for all kids.

\$4,000,000+

Dr Pepper Snapple Group

\$1,000,000 – \$3,999,999

The CarMax Foundation

Disney

Foresters

Health Care Service Corporation operator of

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

Humana and Humana Foundation

\$200,000 - \$999,999

BNP Paribas

JetBlue Airways

McDonald's Foundation

Mattel Children's Foundation

MetLife Foundation

PNC

SAP Americas, Inc.

UnitedHealthcare

The Heinz Endowments

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

\$100,000 – \$199,999

American Heart Association

Annie E. Casey Foundation

C&S Wholesale Grocers

Discover Financial Services

Fidelity Foundation

Forest City Ratner Companies

Kohl's

Mercedes-Benz Financial Services

Morgan Stanley

NBA Cares

Nike, Inc.

New Orleans Recreation Department
Commission

Pacific Gas & Electric Company

Radio Flyer

The Colorado Health Foundation

Verint Systems, Inc.

Zynga.org

\$70,000 - \$99,999

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

American Access Group

AmerisourceBergen and Good Neighbor

Pharmacy

Amneal Pharmaceuticals

Amway

Aspire Schools

Baltimore Gas and Electric

Bank of America - Tampa Bay

BD

Berkadia

Biogen Idec Foundation

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

Brewers Community Foundation, Inc.

Delta Air Lines

DIRECTV

Duquesne Light

Gerdau

Junior League of Chicago

LexisNexis

Livie & Luca

Magnetar Capital

Monumental Sports & Entertainment Foundation

Nashville Predators Foundation

NY/NJ Snowflake Youth Foundation

Pacific Dental Services

Playworld Systems

PSEG Foundation

United Water

Post Properties, Inc. – Post HOPE Foundation, Inc.

Quantum Resources Management, LLC

Reedy Industries

Shutterfly Foundation/ Shutterfly Inc.

Strike, LLC.

Tampa Bay Rays

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott

Foundation
The Toro Company

\$30,000 - \$69,999

A.L. Mailman Foundation
Adobe Systems
Creative Circle
John & Marcia Goldman Foundation
Pennsylvania Municipal League
The Charles & Marie Shepherdson Family Foundation
YoYo.com

\$1,000 - \$29,999

Anonymous (2)
24 Hour Fitness
Bill & Jean Airey
Abell Foundation
Sidney and Florence Banwart
Daniel H. Becker
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Laureate Foundation
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Louisville Gas and Electric
Ron and Mitzi Lumbra
The Mead Family Foundation
MeadWestvaco Foundation
Nancy and Gerry Megas
Meshnick Charitable Family Foundation
Metro United Way (Tocqueville Society)
Northwest Playground Equipment, Inc
Fran and Bill Novelli
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The Nora Roberts Foundation
Marty Rodgers and Monette Dawson
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Accenture
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Playworld Systems
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LOOKING AHEAD

Playing It Forward During 2014 and Beyond

KaBOOM! continues to emphasize that play cannot be relegated to the playground. To that end, we have adopted and implemented six points of view that inform all of our outreach and influence.

Playability is a Competitive Advantage for Cities: Thriving cities depend on attracting and retaining families, which is why they should focus on play as a competitive advantage. Many urban leaders are already focusing on walkability and bikeability, and cities would do well to broaden their horizons and invest in urban playability, as well—not in place of livability, but as an extension of it.

Play Everywhere: To drive widespread behavior change, we want active play to be the easy choice. This is why we encourage cities to be family-friendly and kid-friendly, designed with opportunities to play in all of the places that families and kids already go.

All Types of Play Are Good: We believe in balance. Just as a healthy diet balances proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and other nutrients, a balanced “play diet” should include a mix of all kinds of play, because different types have different benefits. We believe that balanced and active play—active minds, active bodies, and active together—helps kids realize all of play’s benefits.

Kids Need Caring Adults to Thrive: Caring, engaged adults are instrumental in ensuring that kids receive the balanced and active play they need to thrive. On and off the playground, play is a great way to build strong bonds between adults and kids, as well as supportive relationships that help kids learn and grow.

Play Helps Address Toxic Stress: Kids who are exposed to neglect, violence and extreme adversity are at risk of experiencing toxic stress, which undermines so many other aspects of their lives. Play is an important part of the solution because it keeps kids active, and connects them with caring adults.

Play is Critical to a Great Education: Studies show that recess helps kids focus more in the classroom, work better with adults, and improve behavioral issues. But it also prepares them to prosper in the 21st century workforce. As economic competition increases, future workers must be prepared to approach complex challenges with creative solutions. According to Harvard University’s Innovation Lab, play is a central component to developing successful future innovators.

As we look ahead, we are working to ensure that these commitments inform a national movement for play. We are grateful for, and counting on, your continued support.

Thanks to you, we have started boldly down a new path. And with another year of extraordinary accomplishments behind us, there is no telling just how far we can go together.

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