

CITY OF PEABODY

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR EDWARD A. BETTENCOURT, JR.

Peabody Named Among 211 “Playful City USA” Communities

Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt, Jr. is pleased to announce that Peabody has been named a 2014 “Playful City USA” by the national non-profit organization KaBOOM! for the city’s commitment to encouraging physical activity and play among children. The designation makes Peabody eligible for \$15,000, \$20,000, and \$30,000 grants to help get kids and families more active.

“As one of only 211 Playful City USA designees nationwide, this is really a terrific distinction for Peabody,” Mayor Bettencourt said. “More important than prestige however, the designation comes with tremendous opportunity to leverage private funds for public good; In this case, creating more opportunities for our kids to be healthy and active.”

Indeed, today’s generation of children play less than any previous generation despite the many benefits of play. The Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics reports that play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of children.

“Kids need to play actively, every day, at home, in school and in their communities, yet play is disappearing,” said Darrell Hammond, Founder and CEO of KaBOOM! “Playful City USA communities like Peabody are creating innovative programs and initiatives and deserve recognition because of their efforts to give kids the childhood they deserve and best prepare them for the future.”

In recognizing Peabody for its outstanding dedication to play, KaBOOM! pointed to Peabody’s elementary school pilot project called Building Our Kids Success, where lessons on nutrition and teamwork take place on the playground or in a gym. The goal is to prepare children for a day of learning. Efforts in the city are also underway to expand play spaces and make them more inclusive for people of all abilities. The City also plans a “Rec and Roll” program this summer to bring recreational activities to underserved neighborhoods.

“I grew up in a family that stressed the importance of playing sports, being active and staying out of trouble,” Mayor Bettencourt said. “I want Peabody to continue to be a place where kids have many great opportunities to play and have fun every day.”

For more information on the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, visit www.playfulcityusa.org.

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