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**A NEW KID-DESIGNED PLAYGROUND IN LANCASTER ADDRESSES PLAYSPACE INEQUITY**

*The City of Lancaster partnered with The League and KABOOM! to bring joy to hundreds of kids as playgrounds and public spaces reopen*

LANCASTER, Pa., Oct. 6, 2021 – Today, kids in southeast Lancaster city are celebrating their new place to play. The City of Lancaster, the Pennsylvania Municipal League (The League) and KABOOM!, a nonprofit organization focused on ending playspace inequity, have been working together to increase access to playspaces for local kids with the creation of a new, kid-designed playground that was installed this week at Milburn Park. The playground, which was made possible with the generous support of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), The GIANT Company, Highmark, Penn State Health and the Lancaster County Community Foundation, will give kids a quality, safe place to play that is close to where they live and learn.

Under the leadership of Mayor Danene Sorace, the City's mission is to build more equitable greenspace for families in Lancaster city. The renovation project will provide all new play equipment, designed by the children who will use it, in southeast Lancaster city.

"Outdoor physical activity has huge impact on physical and mental health, especially during COVID-19. I am thrilled that we're breaking ground on this project for the families of southeast Lancaster City while leveraging the support and partnership of KABOOM! and volunteers from The League," said Mayor Sorace.

"We expect the additions and improvements at Milburn Park playground to have a positive impact in the city for many years to come," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "Projects like this are made possible through collaborative efforts and we are grateful to our partners, the City of Lancaster, The League and KABOOM!, for prioritizing recreation opportunities that align with DCNR's mission. I cannot stress enough how important The League's work is in helping expand recreation opportunities in Pennsylvania's urban areas where our department and other partners are working to increase access to nature."

Students from Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Phoenix Academy, George Washington Elementary School, and the Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster provided initial feedback, which inspired two proposed playground designs for Milburn Park. Through door-to-door canvassing and the City of Lancaster's digital participation platform, Engage Lancaster, community members and kids helped in finalizing the park and playground design. The new playground will provide hundreds of kids and their families in Lancaster with an incredible playspace that will help spark joy and foster a sense of belonging within their community. The Milburn Park playground will be open to the public by Oct. 9.

“The membership of The League is thrilled to participate in a playground enhancement in the great City of Lancaster,” said League Executive Director Richard J. Schuettler. “The League has facilitated 12 of these builds in our member communities. The provision of safe and modern recreational facilities is a priority for our members and greatly contributes to the quality of life in their respective communities. Many thanks to our partners – the City of Lancaster, DCNR and KABOOM!, as well as The GIANT Company, Highmark, Penn State Health, and The Lancaster County Community Foundation.”

“We are thrilled to be working with The League again for this playground effort,” said Kathleen McKenzie, Vice President of Community Affairs for Highmark Blue Shield. “This is the kind of thing that adds so much value to family life for many people in the region. It really helps bring people together on a regular basis.”

KABOOM! knows that play is essential to the physical, social, and emotional health of every kid. However, far too many kids and communities lack access to parks and playspaces due to historic disinvestment, which disproportionately affects communities of color. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these inequities. Through the creation of this new playspace, designed with the neighborhood’s unique needs and aspirations in mind, The League, the City of Lancaster, KABOOM!, and our partners are working to give every kid the opportunity to experience the joys of childhood.

“At the Lancaster County Community Foundation, we know that extraordinary communities include safe places for families to relax and have fun. We are thrilled to support the City’s partnership with Kaboom that will provide this opportunity for residents of the Southeast quadrant of Lancaster,” said Dave Koser, Director of Programs at the Lancaster County Community Foundation.

“We know disasters and crises often exacerbate the inequities that communities are already experiencing, and in many communities, kids won’t have a playground to go back to once the COVID-19 crisis is over,” says Lysa Ratliff, CEO of KABOOM!. “We must stop the playspace inequities from becoming even deeper after we get through this pandemic, giving every kid the chance to play and just enjoy being a kid.”

Through its partnership with The League, the City of Lancaster, DCNR, The GIANT Company, Highmark, Penn State Health and the Lancaster County Community Foundation, KABOOM! is committed to ending playspace inequity for kids, for communities, for good.

“At The GIANT Company, we’re committed to doing all that we can to connect families for a better future, both inside and outside of our stores,” said Tim Santoro, regional director, The GIANT Company. “We’re thrilled to join forces with the Pennsylvania Municipal League, KABOOM! and Mayor Sorace to help bring a safe, new playground to life in Lancaster, where families can connect and make memories.”

“Safe spaces for kids to meet and play are vital to physical health, emotional development and overall wellbeing,” said Claire Mooney, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center. “We’re pleased to be part of this project and delighted at the health and enjoyment the playground will bring to so many children.”

To ensure that playgrounds can open safely in every community, KABOOM! has issued important playground guidance that all communities, playground owner/operators and caregivers can follow. The guidance can be viewed or downloaded at [kaboom.org/reopen](https://kaboom.org/reopen).

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## **ABOUT THE CITY OF LANCASTER**

Spanning 7 square miles in south Central Pennsylvania, the City of Lancaster is home to 60,000 diverse residents. Committed to building a stronger, more equitable Lancaster block by block, the City of Lancaster oversees a range of public services including public safety, health, housing, parks, streets, and water and sewer operations. For more information, visit [cityoflancasterpa.com](http://cityoflancasterpa.com). Join the conversation at [engage.cityoflancasterpa.com](http://engage.cityoflancasterpa.com).

## **ABOUT THE LEAGUE**

The mission of the Pennsylvania Municipal League (The League) is to strengthen, empower and advocate for effective local government. The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1900 as an advocate for Pennsylvania's 3rd class cities. Today, The League represents Pennsylvania cities, boroughs, townships, home rule communities and towns that all share their municipal policy interests. The Board of Directors oversees the administration of a wide array of municipal services including legislative advocacy, publications, education/training, consulting-based programs, and group insurance trusts. For more information, please visit [PML.org](http://PML.org). Join the conversation at [twitter.com/PAMunicipalLeag](https://twitter.com/PAMunicipalLeag) and [facebook.com/PaMunicipalLeague](https://facebook.com/PaMunicipalLeague).

## **ABOUT KABOOM!**

KABOOM! is the national non-profit that works to achieve playspace equity. Kids who don't have access to play miss out on childhood and are denied critical opportunities to build physical, social and emotional health. And all too often, it more deeply affects communities of color. So we amplify the power of communities to build inspiring playspaces that spark unlimited opportunities for every kid, everywhere. KABOOM! has teamed up with partners to build or improve 17,000+ playspaces, engage more than 1.5 million community members and bring joy to more than 11 million kids.

To learn about our goal to end playspace inequity for good, visit [kaboom.org](http://kaboom.org) and join the conversation at [twitter.com/kaboom](https://twitter.com/kaboom), [facebook.com/kaboom](https://facebook.com/kaboom) and [instagram.com/kaboom](https://instagram.com/kaboom).