http://www.KSCBNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=24021

Non-Profit Organization KaBOOM! Names Liberal Among 217 "Playful City USA" Communities WASHINGTON, D.C. – With research proving play is critical to the overall well-being of children, 217 cities and towns, including Derby, Ellsworth and Liberal, earned recognition from national non-profit KaBOOM! as 2013 Playful City USA communities for their efforts to give children the childhood they deserve by providing ample opportunities for play.

Sponsored by the Humana Foundation, Playful City USA is a national program from KaBOOM! that celebrates and promotes local policies that increase play opportunities for children and is a key platform in combating the lack of play among children.

"Kids need to play actively, every day, at home, in school and in their communities, yet play is disappearing," said Darell Hammond, Founder and CEO of KaBOOM! and author of *The New York Times* Best Seller *KaBOOM!: A Movement to Save Play*. "Children spend nearly eight hours a day in front of a screen; almost half of all poor students are deprived of recess; and to make matters worse, only one in five children live within walking distance of a park. Playful City USA communities like Derby, Ellsworth and Liberal 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 their future."

KaBOOM!, the national non-profit organization dedicated to giving kids the childhood they deserve by bringing play to those who need it most, created Playful City USA in 2007 to help local governments address the lack of play and it is through mayors, city council members, parks and recreation departments, school districts and community leaders that the program succeeds in benefitting children.

Each of the 2013 Playful City USA communities demonstrated creative commitments to addressing the lack of play among children. Playful City USA celebrates and highlights these unique initiatives developed by communities across the country. A primary goal of Playful City USA is to encourage cities and towns to share ideas, concepts and programs in an effort to increase play opportunities for children.

KaBOOM! selected Derby, Ellsworth and Liberal for their outstanding dedication to play. Derby will ask residents to vote for a half-cent sales tax to assist with funding the growth and development of parks and playspaces in the city and, if approved, the city would use the funds to build a 6.5 acre dog park and a 40 acre ball field complex that also would feature playground equipment. The city recently began construction on Madison Avenue Central Park that will eventually create an entire one-square city block of open space for recreation. Derby also holds an annual event called Summerfest featuring recreation activities and informational booths about the importance of play and physical activity in which nearly 5,000 local residents participate.

Ellsworth is working to add playspaces in the city that are accessible for children of all ages and abilities. The city plans to promote the importance of parks and play by posting updates about parks and playgrounds to the city website and working with local school officials to encourage children to use park and playground equipment.

The joint use agreement between Liberal and the local school district has created a mutually beneficial relationship, opening tennis courts and fields for school use and enclosed gyms for public use. Liberal has solicited and incorporated public input as the city began renovating parks throughout the community, resulting in a new skate park and plans for a soccer park.

The 217 Playful City USA communities are now eligible for $15,000, $20,000 and $30,000 grants via Let's Play, a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids and families active nationwide. Grant recipients will be announced in the fall.

For more information on the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, including Let's Play grants and applications for 2014, visit www.playfulcityusa.org.