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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 14, 2013

Ald. Michael Murphy  
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## Milwaukee Recognized as ‘Playful City USA’ Community

*Sign unveiling event Monday will feature Alderman Murphy, Mayor Barrett and MPS representative*

The City of Milwaukee’s recent recognition as a “Playful City USA” community for championing efforts to give children ample outdoor play opportunities will be marked Monday (June 17) with a **news event at N. 94<sup>th</sup> St. and W. Blue Mound Rd.**

**Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, who authored legislation approved by the Common Council last year to require all new elementary schools to provide a minimum amount of safe, open play space to help keep children healthy and active, will be joined by **Mayor Tom Barrett** and **Denise Callaway** from MPS at **9 a.m. Monday** to address the media and to unveil a new sign that tells everyone entering the city limits that Milwaukee is a “Playful City USA” community.

In May, the city was honored with the Playful City USA designation by the national non-profit organization KaBOOM!

Alderman Murphy said only one in five children in the U.S. live within walking distance of a park, and Playful City USA communities like Milwaukee are creating innovative programs and initiatives and have earned recognition because of efforts to “allow kids to be kids and to best prepare them for their future.”

**-More-**

## **Playful City USA/ADD ONE**

“Academic research has shown a direct correlation between healthy minds and strong bodies,” Alderman Murphy said. “Now is the time to ensure that our children have access to a healthy and active lifestyle.”

Mayor Barrett said: “As a Playful City USA, I am happy to report that the City of Milwaukee continues to enable children to grow into healthy, happy adults who will make positive changes in our community. I have always said that Milwaukee is a great place to live, work and PLAY!”

The Council legislation sponsored by Alderman Murphy applies only to new public, private, and parochial elementary schools, and states that at least 75 square feet of outdoor play space must be provided for each child using the space at the time. In the event where that is not possible, supervised safe trips to off-site recreation areas are required.

A soft playing area, such as sand or mulch, is also required and concrete and asphalt surfaces under climbing equipment and slides will now be prohibited.

In the 2013 city budget, the Common Council adopted Alderman Murphy’s amendment creating a Playground Improvement Challenge Fund – a \$100,000 matching grant program to help fund improvements at city playgrounds. The fund is making resources available this year, and the first project will help fund improvements at the Merrill Park playground near N. 35th and W. Michigan Streets.

For the Merrill Park playground project, U.S. Bank is providing \$30,000, and Marquette University High School is contributing \$10,000, Alderman Murphy said.

KaBOOM! is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing safe playing spaces for every child in America. Since its inception in 1996, KaBOOM! has mapped over 90,000 playing areas and constructed more than 2,200 playgrounds for children.