
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 9, 2016

Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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MKE Plays offering summer jobs to youths and providing meals at new playgrounds

In partnership with the city's Earn and Learn Summer Youth Internship Program and the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Department, MKE Plays will employ six young Milwaukeeans this summer to help offer free, drop-in programming at two newly-reconstructed playgrounds.

"When we launched this effort to provide kids with safe, engaging play spaces throughout the city, it was always our goal to turn these playgrounds into a neighborhood gathering place," said Alderman Michael J. Murphy, the originator of the MKE Plays program. "Now that we've rebuilt two of them, the next step in the process is increasing their utilization, and this new partnership does just that."

Running Mondays through Thursdays from June 20 through August 11, the MKE Plays summer programming will engage young people at the city's Arlington Heights playground (3429 W. Pierce St.) and the play space at N. 17th Street and W. Vine Street. MPS Recreation will help staff the program and provide employee training, and the city's Earn and Learn program will employ three high school-aged "play leaders" at each site to lead the activities and supervise participants.

The Hunger Task Force will offer participants a free meal at the conclusion of each day's activities, part of its citywide plan to offer meals at more than 160 sites.

Programming will run from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. at Arlington Heights, with facilities and support provided by the Layton Boulevard West Neighbors. At 17th and Vine, programming will run from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with facilities and support provided by the nearby Cross Church.

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MKE Plays/ADD ONE

The MKE Plays initiative is a “bottom-up, community-centered approach” to replacing aging or obsolete equipment in city-owned play areas. The initiative has raised more than \$1.3 million in private funding to replace equipment at 12 playgrounds with input from local residents, who help determine how the park should be designed so it complements neighborhood identity.

As MKE Plays completes the reconstruction of more playgrounds, Alderman Murphy said it’s his hope that the city will be able to bring similar summer programming to more neighborhoods in need.

“In households where there aren’t the means to provide regular supervision, summer can be a dangerous time for kids who are left to their own devices,” Alderman Murphy said. “By rehabbing these playgrounds and providing organized activities through the MKE Plays program, we’re not only keeping kids healthy through regular exercise, but we’re keeping them safe as well.”

Alderman Murphy added, “I specifically want to thank our partners in the Earn and Learn Summer Youth Internship Program, the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Department and the Hunger Task Force for making this program possible, and for working together for the betterment of our community as a whole.”