



June 20, 2016

Ald. Michael Murphy  
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## **MKE Plays, Sarah Zarate receive recognition from Public Policy Forum**

The playground-transforming **MKE Plays** program and a former staff director for the office of the Common Council President have been selected for **2016 Salute Awards** by the **Public Policy Forum**.

**Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, who helped launch MKE Plays last year when he was Common Council president, said MKE Plays was recognized for “Public-Private Cooperation,” and **Sarah Zarate** – who helped execute then-Council President Murphy’s vision of MKE Plays when she served as his staff director – was honored as a “Leader of the Future.”

The Public Policy Forum (PPF) will present the 2016 Salute Awards during a special ceremony on **Tuesday, June 21** at the Italian Conference Center, 631 E. Chicago St.

Alderman Murphy said the recognition is humbling and reaffirming. “I’m extremely grateful and humbled that the Forum recognized MKE Plays for what it is doing to help children across Milwaukee, but also for what makes the program so successful – the public-private cooperation it embraces – and the private generosity it has been blessed to receive from foundations and philanthropic entities,” he said.

Ms. Zarate served as staff director to the Common Council President from June 2014 to April 2016, conducting policy analysis and designing public policy initiatives, including MKE Plays and the MKE Peace Project. The PPF credited Ms. Zarate for taking the initiative to design, organize and oversee MKE Plays and the MKE Peace Project, and noted that she “redefined the role of the Council President Chief of Staff position.”

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## **Honors for MKE Plays/ADD ONE**

The MKE Plays program is helping to transform 12 of the city's most deteriorated playgrounds into models of local collaboration and renovation. The program was approved by the Common Council in March 2015 and incorporates both public and private funding sources to accelerate the pace of reconstruction and allow for more innovative designs.

Alderman Murphy has said the MKE Plays initiative "is based on the premise that equal access to resources leads to healthier communities and improved social outcomes," and that it envisions a city "with play areas whose condition is not determined by the ZIP code or district they are in, but rather are equally equipped to inspire a child's imagination" regardless of where they are located in the city.

This year's PPF Salute Awards included categories that recognize governments and school districts for strong financial management, innovation, partnership and cooperation, as well as individuals in the public sector for excellence and lifetime achievement.