At KaBOOM!, we believe ALL kids deserve great, safe places to play in cohesive communities that are connected to opportunity.

The tragic reality, though, is that too many kids, particularly the 14 million kids growing up in poverty, are denied what their more affluent peers are likely to have in abundance—joyous places to play where they live, where they go to school, and throughout their neighborhoods. Without the opportunity to play every day, kids miss out on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, collaborating with peers, building healthy bodies and making friends. Without quality playspaces, communities miss out on developing relationships and connections that bolster safety and foster the wellbeing of all residents. We know that great playspaces can change outcomes for kids and communities—especially where there is a legacy of underinvestment. That’s why we continue to focus on working directly with communities and kids to create the playful opportunities that ALL kids need and deserve.

This year we built our 3,000th playground with our wonderful partner, THEARC, in our hometown of Washington, DC, where our very first playground was built with community volunteers 22 years ago. In 1995, our founder, Darell Hammond, read a story about two young kids in Southeast DC, Iesha and Clendon, who on a hot summer day, could not find a place to play near their home and resorted to an abandoned car, where they got trapped inside and died. This tragic story, and the subsequent community outcry for safe playspaces inspired Darell to act, resulting in our very first playground. We were honored to return to that same community to build our 3,000th playground, furthering our legacy of partnering with kids and communities who need investments in play the most. Unfortunately, the reality is that the inequity that drove our first playground project continues to exist in communities across the country that are cut off from opportunity. We must continue to work to change that reality, ultimately improving the possible outcomes for these kids.

The good news is that this isn’t the only story of change we are writing: Our 3,000th playground was one of 332 community-designed, community-built playspaces we created across the U.S. in 2017. Over 30,000 volunteers rolled up their sleeves to bring these playful PLAYces to life for nearly 425,000 kids in under-resourced neighborhoods.

We are fortunate to work with dedicated National Partners—The CarMax Foundation, Dr Pepper Snapple Group, Foresters Financial, Target, The Walt Disney Company, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bezos Family Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—and all of our Partners in Play. Together, we celebrate our accomplishments, acknowledge there is much more work to be done and recommit to ensuring that all kids, regardless of zip code, get the childhood they deserve filled with play.

To get there, we will continue to forge partnerships with municipal systems and agencies—public schools, public housing, public parks, and beyond—in order to reach the kids who are too often overlooked. We will also continue to drive innovation in playspace design for the benefit of the communities we serve because all kids deserve the best.

Together, we can help rewrite the story for all kids: A story filled with play, joy and hope.
By the numbers

332 communities impacted

30,000 volunteers engaged

425,000 kids who now have a great place to play
KaBOOM! believes communities can address many urgent problems—especially those plaguing under-resourced neighborhoods—by bringing people together to ensure that all kids have great, safe places to play. Every time we build a playground, we build community. The relationships forged through the building a playground together create a network of neighbors who protect and maintain safe places where kids can play—and thrive. In 2017, we helped schools, parks, public housing communities, transportation systems, and child-serving non-profits build wondrous PLAYces for nearly 425,000 kids across the country.

KaBOOM! recognizes that kids and families have different barriers and opportunities to live active, healthy and playful lives in safe and connected communities, and often these barriers are determined by socio-economic status and race. Our organization was founded on one value—equity—the belief that a kid’s zip code should never determine the quality of their opportunities or the kinds of places they have to play. While we innovate to expand our impact, this intersection of place and opportunity is where we continue to focus our work. Project after project, we see communities come together with determination, building PLAYces that focus on the well-being of kids, while making an investment that pays out so many benefits for the well-being of the entire community.
Schools

Across the country, many schoolyards are bare. There is no joy of trying to swing your way to the moon. There is no thrill of racing down the slide. Too many elementary schools and their surrounding communities lack PLAYces that would help their students become healthier, engaged and happy learners. We are partnering with school systems to address this inequity.

“We had been trying to cultivate relationships with the school district. This project really elevated our status and helped decision makers think more broadly about what access and safety means.”

—Vanessa Cascio, Community Liason, Living Streets Alliance
Thomas Gray Elementary—Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas—Houston, TX

Following Hurricane Harvey, the school doors at Thomas Gray Elementary remained shut as families took time to assess damages in the surrounding area. Principal Scott Dubberke knew bringing the community together to build a playspace was exactly what they all needed to begin the healing process. Playground Build Day took place less than a month after the hurricane made landfall. Principal Dubberke saw the playground as something that would bring joy to the community and shed light during a dark time. With the support of KaBOOM! and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, the school was able to offer its students a break from the surrounding recovery chaos and an opportunity to restore normalcy. This project also marked the beginning of an initial several million dollar commitment from partners to build or refurbish 35 playspaces for impacted communities in the Houston area, important disaster rebuilding work which is now continuing and expanding in 2018.

Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy—Radio Flyer—Chicago, IL

Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy is located at the fault line between two neighboring territories where crime and violence have been rampant. This violence has cast a shadow over the playground at the park across the street from the school, which made parents feel uneasy about letting their kids play outdoors. School staff and families wanted to create a safe haven for the surrounding community. Working with Radio Flyer and the Tolton community, we built a space where staff and parents feel secure bringing their kids to play. This project is one example of the many that show the power of, and responsibility to create, great, safe places to play—especially at school, where kids should always feel safe.

Playful Gardens—Tucson, AZ

Through our Play Everywhere work, we are transforming everyday spaces—sidewalks, bus stops, vacant lots and beyond—into vibrant PLAYces for kids. Many of our Play Everywhere projects have brought innovative, unexpected playspaces to schools across the country. A lack of pedestrian safety has remained one of the biggest and most consistent challenges for Pima County and more specifically, for the tightly-knit residents of Pueblo Gardens. More than 75 percent of students attending the local elementary school live in the surrounding area, which makes commuting to school a high-priority safety concern for families there. Local non-profit Living Streets Alliance aimed to beautify the route and give kids an opportunity to learn about their neighborhood history through interactive sidewalk games and murals. Over 300 volunteers came together in unity and common purpose to transform their streets into “Playful Gardens,” resulting in dignifying the neighborhood, teaching kids about their neighborhood culture, and providing students with a safer commute to school.
WHERE WE WORK

Parks

Many cities are making strides to increase livability with investments in parks. Yet, too often these investments do not prioritize the needs of kids and families, particularly in under-resourced neighborhoods. Together with our municipal partners, we are elevating community leadership, addressing inequity and building vibrant community hubs with and for kids and families.

“Better connected communities are safer. And the park is a place where neighbors make connections and become friends.”

— Cara Spencer, Ward 20 Alderwoman, St. Louis, MO
**Gravois Park—New Balance Foundation—St. Louis, MO**

Suffering from years of neglect, Gravois Park is one of the most challenged, crime-ridden neighborhoods in St. Louis, according to Councilmember Cara Spencer. The lack of well-lit areas and broken playground equipment warned local kids and families to stay away, including Cara and her son. Wanting to provide a safe space where the community can gather, Cara began revitalizing the park by planting trees and installing lights. The KaBOOM! playground, built in partnership with the New Balance Foundation, City of St. Louis and Cherokee Street Development League, provided the anchor in creating a great, safe place for kids to play. This project led to increased community cohesion and sense of ownership resulting in a 16% drop in crime.

**Eager Park—Annie E. Casey Foundation—Baltimore, MD**

Eager Park in East Baltimore was designed to address decades of disinvestment that had left the neighborhood without park space and other amenities found in more affluent parts of Baltimore. The newly-developed park already included an amphitheater, fountain, adult exercise equipment, walking paths and wide open green space. However, neighborhood residents insisted that Eager Park needed a space where kids and families could come to play. Thanks to support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the UPS Foundation and the Rouse Company Foundation, we continued our work in Baltimore and built an innovative new playspace with cutting-edge play features. The addition of the playground makes it clear that Eager Park is a great place for kids and families to gather, too.

**Balch Springs Parks & Recreation Center—Foresters Financial—Balch Springs, TX**

The Balch Springs community suffered the loss of teen resident, Jordan Edwards, on April 29, 2017, just two short weeks before our scheduled project there. This tragedy did not stop the community. Together in unity and positive spirit, over 100 volunteers joined KaBOOM! and Foresters Financial to build a great place for kids to play. The community displayed incredible strength and resilience, opting to use this project as an opportunity to demonstrate to kids in the neighborhood that the community was committed to bringing them joy and helping them reach their full potential. Not only did this playground help to heal the community and give kids and families a safe place to gather and grieve, it showed the community what is possible when people come together with a common purpose.
WHERE WE WORK

Public housing communities

Over 750,000 kids call public housing communities home. Their parents and caregivers are often the hardworking people whose jobs we depend on daily, but whose wages make affordable rent an absolute necessity. Public housing agencies are suffering from decades of divestment and billions of dollars in capital deficits that have crippled their ability to invest in amenities for kids. We are assisting our public housing agency partners to address serious gaps in play infrastructure throughout their systems, with the goal of reaching hundreds of thousands of kids who need great places to play the most.
Pomonok Houses—New York City Housing Authority—Flushing, NY

As the oldest and largest housing authority in the U.S., New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) serves 1 out of every 14 New Yorkers and is home to over 100,000 kids, most under the age of 13. For years, Pomonok Houses—a housing community in Flushing, NY—had been advocating for new playground equipment to replace their dangerous, broken playground built in the 1970s. With the help of JetBlue and other supporters, we kicked off the NextGen NYCHA Plays initiative, our partnership with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the Fund for Public Housing, at Pomonok Houses. The community rallied together to create a vibrant space where kids can interact and play, and adults can connect with one another, contributing to a safer and more cohesive community.

McCulloh Homes—The Loveman Foundation—Baltimore, MD

McCulloh Homes, a Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) community, had been lacking a safe place to play for the more than 400 kids living there. The large family development had no play equipment and, with prevalent drug activity in the area, parents did not feel comfortable allowing their kids to travel to other communities to access a playground or recreational equipment. Not only did this new playspace help put parents at ease, it built a network of neighbors committed to ensuring the safety of the community and helped strengthen community pride and comradery amongst the residents of McCulloh Homes. Following the building of the McCulloh Homes playground in August with The Loveman Foundation, we launched a multi-project partnership with HABC to provide more public housing communities in Baltimore in 2018 and beyond.

OX4D Plays—Houston, TX

Oxford Place was initially established in 1977 as a housing community for single adults. Over time, it became a Houston Housing Authority property and home to many families, yet still lacked the playspaces that are needed in family-oriented neighborhoods. We partnered with the Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) at the University of Houston to create a Play Everywhere project aimed to engage the kids through playful sidewalk activities and playful greenspace activation. Oxford Place is now bustling with kids playing hopscotch; teenagers racing each other on the metered sidewalk and adults getting to know their neighbors. The sidewalk activities continue to bring together kids and families who may have not connected otherwise and have mobilized older kids and their families to transform their community with confidence and new ideas.
“We need to dignify public spaces and public life. It creates social mixing that helps people understand each other.”

—Hannah O’Leary, Project Analyst, Lexington Downtown Development Authority

Transit systems

From bus shelters and the areas around bus stops, to subway platform walls and the waiting areas of transit centers, there are opportunities to transform blank walls and hard benches into dynamic, vibrant and safe places to play. If taking public transportation becomes an opportunity for play along the way, the often-onerous process of getting from place to place, and waiting once you get there, can become a joyful and meaningful experience for both kids and the adults in their lives.
**Rail Trail Symphony—Charlotte, NC**

KaBOOM! Play Everywhere offers communities an innovative opportunity to transform their transportation experience, while also increasing equitable access to new public space amenities. When the Rail Trail, a trail system that runs along Charlotte’s light rail line, was brought through the South End community, many kids from nearby under-resourced communities thought this tremendous asset was not “for them.” Instead of walking on the trail, they would take more dangerous routes to their destinations. The Rail Trail Symphony project gave the kids ownership of the trail by taking their designs and creating a colorful PLAYce they can sit, have fun, make music and dance—on the trail they now know is theirs.

**Metro McAllen Swing-and-Ride—McAllen, TX**

KaBOOM! Play Everywhere grantee, the City of McAllen, sought to turn the tedious experience of waiting for public transportation into a playful one for kids and families with the Metro-McAllen Swing-and-Ride. The City of McAllen has made consistent efforts to build playful installations throughout the city, but had yet to impact public transportation. City officials targeted a pathway that connects a local school and library in the city—each day, thousands of kids walk across this pathway, which is also home to a bus station. Metro-McAllen Swing-and-Ride, consisting of a custom-made swing set, oversized musical instruments and new bus shelter, has created a “kid-zone,” and helps bus riders and passersby of all ages take a break from the stresses of their day and create a playful moment to carry forward with them.

**BUSt! Boredom—Lexington, KY**

In Lexington, especially at the Lexington Transit Center, thousands of kids spend time each day waiting for public transportation as their parents or caregivers commute to work or run errands across the city. For many families, public transportation is an absolute necessity. BUSt! Boredom focused on transforming this bus transit center into an interactive space that draws kids away from dangerous bus traffic and encourages kids and families to connect and play with each other while going about the normal routine of their day. The interactive wall and ceiling installations help turn these moments spent waiting into joyous ones and encourage interactions that enable people to get to know each other. Additionally, public transportation users feel safer when interacting with others at this location in comparison to others in the city.
WHERE WE WORK

Child-serving non-profits

Working with child-serving non-profits is critical to achieving our mission. We work with incredible community-based partners who are allies in improving the lives of the kids and families we serve. We are thrilled to work with these anchor institutions that recognize that quality play opportunities are critical solutions to help address key issues facing their communities.

“The kids we serve, including military youth, love the Rigamjig. They love exploring the pieces and finding new things to make, and we have incorporated STEM concepts as well.”

—Marli Fitzgerald, Development Manager, E.A. Tutt Boys & Girls Club
Intensive Therapeutics—
Dr Pepper Snapple Group—
West Caldwell, New Jersey

Intensive Therapeutics is dedicated to offering both individual and group therapy programs for kids with special needs. The non-profit serves over 220 kids a year through the occupational therapy, speech therapy and physical therapy services provided by pediatric professionals. However, it is difficult for these kids to reach their maximum potential without outdoor play—where the kids can play like any other kid. Having recently moved locations, Intensive Therapeutics was lacking an outdoor playspace where they could provide this type of therapy. With the help of a Build it Yourself grant, thanks to Dr Pepper Snapple Group’s Let’s Play initiative, Intensive Therapeutics was able to build its own playground where the kids can grow stronger, develop their social skills and learn to play with one another all at once. This playspace has provided Intensive Therapeutics with another tool to help these kids reach their maximum potential.

South Dade YMCA Family Center—Target—Miami, FL

The South Dade YMCA Family Center is actively working with the kids it serves to help reverse the summer learning loss often experienced by most youth. Over 6,000 kids are currently enrolled in the organization’s membership or program services. Many of these kids are at a higher risk during the summer due to their socioeconomic status and inability to afford additional recreational or educational experiences. In collaboration with Target, KaBOOM! granted the South Dade YMCA Family Center an Imagination Playground™ in an effort to enhance the STEM learning experience. These kids light up and gain renewed energy as soon as they see the large, blue foam blocks that they can put together in any way they see fit, which research from Purdue University found builds early engineering skills.

E.A. Tutt Boys & Girls Club—
The CarMax Foundation—
Colorado Springs, CO

The E.A. Tutt Boys & Girls Club in Colorado Springs, CO serves over 550 kids each year with the goal of providing youth with a safe place to grow and learn. The organization is committed to serving kids who need it most—most are living with just one parent or guardian, while 25 percent of kids have at least one parent serving in the military. As part of our Week of Play focused on bringing playspaces to military families in partnership with The CarMax Foundation, we granted a Rigamajig—a life-size building kit—to provide an additional play opportunity for these kids. For E.A. Tutt Boys & Girls Club, Rigamajig not only encourages kids to play with each other in a safe space, but also enhances the STEM program that is extremely active and popular among the kids and parents alike.

Intensive Therapeutics—
Dr Pepper Snapple Group—
West Caldwell, New Jersey

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On October 18, 2017, hundreds of community members, representatives from our partners past and present and 92 Boomers (that’s what we call ourselves!) put on purple t-shirts and came together to build our 3000th playground.

This was a special place and time for us. We completed this playspace 22 years to the day in the same Washington DC neighborhood where we started building our first playground on October 18, 1995. Not too far from the campus of our wonderful partner, THEARC, all those years ago, two young children, Iesha and Clendon, lost their lives, suffocating in a car while searching for a place to play. Our organization was founded in their memory, honoring the desire of the community to ensure every kid had a safe, fun place to play where parents could come together and support and nurture their kids.

Over the past 22 years, we’ve served 9 million kids and engaged over 1.5 million volunteers, keeping Iesha and Clendon’s memory near and dear to our hearts. And now, 37,000 kids have a brand new, state-of-the-art, innovative place to play at THEARC in Washington, DC.
2017 financial activities

REVENUES

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<td>Contributions &amp; Grants</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
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EXPENSES

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NET ASSETS

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<td>Net assets: end of year</td>
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We feel a great responsibility to our donors, large and small. That is why we are proud of our efficient operations. In 2017, eighty-six percent of our budget went directly to fund programs that bring play to kids. Only eight cents of every dollar was spent on fundraising, and six cents per dollar went towards administrative costs.

KaBOOM! meets all 20 of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance's standards for Charity Accountability and has the Gold Seal of Transparency on GuideStar.

To learn more about our income, expenses, and assets you can view our consolidated financial statements for 2017 and 2016 at kaboom.org/about_kaboom/financials.
National Partners

There is no other way to put it: Without the support of our partners, our work would not be possible.
Partners in Play

The work we do at KaBOOM! is made possible through the generous donations of our funding partners who are committed to creating safe places for kids to play. Through their support we are able to ensure kids get the childhood they deserve.

AbbVie Foundation
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Amway
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FAO Schwarz
Fiesta Bowl Charities
Finish Line Youth Foundation
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   Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico*
   Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas*
Index Exchange
International Paper Foundation
JetBlue
JM Family Enterprises, Inc.
J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Major League Baseball Players Trust
Mead Family Foundation
Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy
MetLife Foundation
Miami Dolphins Foundation
Minnesota Vikings
Morgan Stanley
Nashville Predators Foundation
Natalie Orfalea Foundation
NBA Cares
New Balance Foundation
Newell Brands
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Pacific Life Foundation
Pennsylvania Municipal League
Playworld Systems, Inc.
PSEG Foundation
Pure Storage
Radio Flyer
Random Act Funding
Reedy Industries, Inc.
Steele Foundation
Tampa Bay Rays
The Colorado Health Foundation
The Fund for Public Housing
The Home Depot Foundation
The Smile Generation
The Toro Company
Travelers
UnitedHealthcare
Walt Disney Parks and Resorts
Warner Music Group
Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation
Yokohama Tire Corporation

* Funding Partner’s support was for the purpose of serving residents of the Funding Partner’s local service area.
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List is current as of December 2017.