

## **ROC the Future, Common Ground Health to build community playground**

By: [Velvet Spicer](#) October 22, 2019

KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit that works to ensure every kid and community have access to quality playspaces, has selected ROC the Future to lead a playground project here.



A playground sponsored by KaBOOM! (Photo courtesy of KaBOOM!)

ROC the Future, in partnership with Common Ground Health's Healthi Kids Initiative, is one of the three StriveTogether communities that will work with KaBOOM! to design a community playground that will help close racial and socioeconomic gaps in kids' access to great places to play. The partnership will build the civic infrastructure through a project model that brings diverse residents and organizations together for youth.

"Every kid deserves a safe, amazing place to play. ROC the Future believes in the value and importance of play to support cognitive and social building skills for children," said Jackie Campbell, ROC the Future Alliance director. "We are more than thrilled to be selected for this playground project to support children and look forward to breaking ground at a future site in the city of Rochester."

Increasing access to safe places to play in Rochester is the cornerstone of the PlayROCs campaign at Common Ground Health, officials said, and the KaBOOM! grant will further the collective mission to make Rochester a "playful city."

"We can all agree that play is an essential part of childhood, and all kids should have opportunities to play as a matter of their human right," said Lysa Ratliff, vice president of partnership development at KaBOOM! "Research shows—what many parents know—that children learn through play. The more time they have to play outside with their peers, the more likely they are able to grow essential social, physical and cognitive skills that are so important for their future success. We are proud to partner with StriveTogether to bring this vision to life."

ROC the Future and Common Ground Health will work together to recruit 200 volunteers in the community to join staff and partners in the design, planning and installation of the playground before

September 2020. The process will kick off with “design day,” where kids and families will meet to create the design specifications for an innovative, custom play space.

The process will culminate with a day where hundreds of volunteers will build the playground. In between, partners and volunteers will work on a grassroots campaign to raise local matching funds and engage with elected officials and community leaders.

“StriveTogether shares the belief with KaBOOM! that the well-being of communities starts with the well-being of kids,” StriveTogether President and CEO Jennifer Blatz said. “Creating shared spaces fosters community pride and helps close the racial and socioeconomic gaps that deny many children great places to play. Local change is possible when the community unites around a common vision for families and kids.”

KaBOOM! is a nonprofit dedicated to bringing balanced and active play into the daily lives of all kids, particularly those growing up in poverty in America.

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