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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2013

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CHICAGO NAMED A "PLAYFUL CITY USA" COMMUNITY

City is One of 217 Communities Recognized Nationally by the Non-Profit Organization KaBOOM!

The national non-profit organization KaBOOM has named Chicago as a 2013 Playful City USA community for its efforts to provide children with access to a wide variety of safe opportunities for play. This is the first time Chicago has been recognized, and it is one of 217 communities this year.

"Throughout Chicago, we are investing in better public spaces and build stronger communities," said Mayor Emanuel. "Together, working with parents, neighbors and community leaders, we can ensure that our children have safe and engaging environments to play and learn in every neighborhood."

A major component of the City's recognition is the Mayor's call to ensure that every child in Chicago will live within a ten-minute walk from a neighborhood park. In March, Mayor Emanuel unveiled the new "Chicago Plays" Playground Program, which is a five-year playground renovation project that targets the replacement of equipment at over 300 aging playgrounds throughout the city, including 50 by November 2013. And with the start of this school year, Chicago's elementary school students are guaranteed recess, a time to relax and recharge, for the first time in almost three decades.

"Kids need to play actively, every day, at home, in school and in their communities, yet play is disappearing," said Darell Hammond, Founder and CEO of KaBOOM! and author of *The New York Times* Best Seller [*KaBOOM!: A Movement to Save Play*](#). "Children spend nearly eight hours a day in front of a screen; almost half of all poor students are deprived of recess; and to make matters worse, only one in five children live within walking distance of a park. Playful City USA communities like Chicago are creating innovative programs and initiatives and deserve recognition because of their efforts to give kids the childhood they deserve and best prepare them for their future."

KaBOOM!, the national non-profit organization dedicated to giving kids the childhood they deserve by bringing play to those who need it most, created Playful City USA in 2007 to help local

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governments address the lack of play and it is through mayors, city council members, parks and recreation departments, school districts and community leaders that the program succeeds in benefitting children. Sponsored by the Humana Foundation, Playful City USA is a national program from KaBOOM! that celebrates and promotes local policies that increase play opportunities for children and is a key platform in combating the lack of play among children.

Today's generation of children play less than any previous generation despite the vast benefits of play. The *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* reports that play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of children.

The 217 Playful City USA honorees range in size from seven-time honorees such as San Francisco and Spartanburg, South Carolina, to first-time recipient Ellsworth, Kansas. These Playful City USA communities are making a commitment to play and physical activity by developing unique local action plans to increase the quantity and quality of play in their community.

Each of the 2013 Playful City USA communities demonstrated creative commitments to addressing the lack of play among children. Playful City USA celebrates and highlights these unique initiatives developed by communities across the country. A primary goal of Playful City USA is to encourage cities and towns to share ideas, concepts and programs in an effort to increase play opportunities for children.

The 217 Playful City USA communities are now eligible for \$15,000, \$20,000 and \$30,000 grants via Let's Play, a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids and families active nationwide. Grant recipients will be announced in the fall.

For more information on the KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, including Let's Play grants and applications for 2014, visit www.playfulcityusa.org.

The city was also recognized for additional initiatives, including: plans to install a total of 80 learning gardens in CPS schools across the city, which bring together parents, teachers, and community organizations to support student learning and provide students with hands-on nutrition and science education opportunities; the implementation of *Healthy CPS*, a comprehensive plan building off *Healthy Chicago*, the city's multi-faceted public health agenda dedicated to making Chicago the healthiest city in the nation; and partnering with Slam Dunk to refurbish 100 basketball courts around the city in 2012, more than any other major city in North America.

About KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is the national non-profit dedicated to giving kids the childhood they deserve by bringing play to those who need it most. Children today spend less time playing outdoors than any previous generation, a fact that is having disastrous consequences on their health, achievement levels, and overall well-being. Social entrepreneur Darell Hammond founded non-profit KaBOOM! in 1996 in

Washington, D.C. with a vision of creating a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America because children need to play actively every day at home, in school and in their communities. Since then, KaBOOM! has mapped over 90,000 places to play, built more than 2,200 playgrounds, and successfully advocated for play policies in hundreds of cities across the country. KaBOOM! also provides communities with online tools to self-organize and take action to support play on both a local and national level. Hammond chronicles the founding of the organization and the importance of the cause of play in his *The New York Times* Best Seller [KaBOOM!: A Movement to Save Play](#), now out in paperback. The book details how businesses and communities can work together to save play for children across the country. All author proceeds support KaBOOM!. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has an office in San Mateo, Calif. For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.

About the Humana Foundation

The Humana Foundation was established in 1981 as the philanthropic arm of Humana Inc., one of the nation's leading health care companies. Located in Louisville, Ky., the site of Humana's corporate headquarters, the Foundation's mission is to promote healthy lives and healthy communities. The Foundation's key funding priorities are childhood health, intergenerational health, and active lifestyles. For more information, visit www.humanafoundation.org.

Humana and the Humana Foundation are dedicated to Corporate Social Responsibility. Our goal is to ensure that every business decision we make reflects our commitment to improving the health and well-being of our members, our associates, the communities we serve, and our planet.

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