



City of New York
Parks & Recreation
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner

rockwellgroup



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**IMAGINATION PLAYGROUND IN A BOX LANDS IN
TEN PLAYGROUNDS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY ON AUGUST 10**

*Architect David Rockwell, in Partnership with KaBOOM! and
the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
Encourage Child-Directed Free Play with Series of Portable Playground Units*

August 12, 2009 (New York, NY) – New York City Department of Parks & Recreation collaborated with architecture and design firm, Rockwell Group, and national non-profit organization, KaBOOM! to install ten **Imagination Playground in a BOX** units throughout all five boroughs of New York City this week. This portable version of the Rockwell Group-designed Imagination Playground transforms existing playgrounds from traditional play spaces into ever-changing environments that inspire creative, collaborative play for children in Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx and Brooklyn.

David Rockwell, founder and CEO of Rockwell Group, conceived of Imagination Playground around the concept of unstructured, child-directed “free play,” where children determine their own activities, alone and with their peers. The City broke ground on the flagship, Imagination Playground this past spring in Burling Slip by South Street Seaport, which is expected to open Summer 2010. This type of fixed-site Imagination Playgrounds as well as the portable Imagination Playgrounds in a BOX offer raw materials of creativity and sensory exploration, including sand and water, as well as play props including building blocks, carts, fabric, crates and other safe tools that will enable children to play in intuitive ways. They can build something, tear it down, and start all over again.

“I am so thrilled to introduce our Imagination Playground concepts to the children of New York City, and am so excited about the opportunity to bring our portable playgrounds to all the boroughs this summer” said David Rockwell. “Now there are Imagination Playground in a BOX pilots popping up all over the country, and I hope this the trend just continues to expand and enrich the lives of children.”

“Imagination Playground in a BOX is a great way for children across the city to experience the fantastic world of ‘free play’” said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Thanks to the Rockwell Group and KaBOOM! for bringing these BOXes to our playgrounds, giving every child throughout the city the opportunity to experience these magnificent mobile units. Imagination Playground in a BOX furthers

our commitment to bring the latest innovations in design and early childhood education to New York City’s kids.”

A compliment to traditional playgrounds with fixed equipment for physically active play, Imagination Playground in a BOX provides a flexible armature for many types of play. A colorful container on wheels that is reminiscent of a trunk full of treasures, Imagination Playground in a BOX is a portable, expandable collection of Imagination Playground’s signature loose parts. The sides and top of the boxes open to reveal a variety of loose parts such as foam blocks and sand and water tools, and found items such as tarps, fabric and milk crates. Here is a list of where the Imagination Playground in a BOX units are located:

QUEENS

Bayswater Playground
Beach 32 Street & Dickens Avenue

Lower Highland Playground
Jamaica Avenue & Elton Street

MANHATTAN

Bellevue South Park
East 26 – 28 Streets & 2nd Avenue

J Hood Wright Park
West 173 Street & Ft Washington Avenue

STATEN ISLAND

Corporal Thompson Park Playground
Broadway & Wayne Street

Bloomingdale Park Playground
Drumgoole Road & Maguire Avenue

THE BRONX

St. Mary's Playground
Smith Street between Nelson & Huntington Streets

St. James Playground
East 193 Street & Jerome Avenue

BROOKLYN

Betsy Head Playground
Dumont Avenue & Bristol Street

Maria Hernandez Park
Knickerbocker Avenue & Starr Street

“We think Imagination Playground in a BOX has the capacity to revolutionize the way kids play by fostering increased levels of creativity and cooperation, as well as a direct

connection between children and their environment,” said Darell Hammond, CEO and co-founder of KaBOOM!. “Working with Rockwell Group to implement Imagination Playground in communities across the nation has allowed us to come one step closer to a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America.”

Rockwell Group partnered with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to create the permanent flagship Imagination Playground at Burling Slip in the South Street Seaport in lower Manhattan as part of a public/private collaboration. In order to bring the play value concept of the flagship Imagination Playground to other locations across the country, Rockwell Group joined forces with KaBOOM! to launch the first ever Imagination Playground in a BOX at the Brownsville Recreation Center playground in Brooklyn, NY in July 2008. The success of the portable playground in Brooklyn paved the way for KaBOOM! to pilot the concept at schools and recreation centers in Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Miami and Honolulu.

Rockwell Group is an award winning, cross-disciplinary 140-person architecture and design firm specializing in cultural, hospitality, retail, product, and set design. Based in New York, with satellite offices in Madrid and Dubai, the firm crafts a unique narrative and an immersive environment for each project. Rockwell’s interest in theater has informed much of the firm’s work, which includes the W Hotel, Union Square, Adour Alain Ducasse at the St. Regis New York, the central Marketplace of the JetBlue terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport, set design for the 2009 Academy Awards ceremony, the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, Nobu restaurants worldwide, set designs for Broadway’s “Hairspray,” Canyon Ranch Living in Miami, the Elinor Bunin-Munroe Film Center at Lincoln Center, the Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, and the Imagination Playground Initiative. Mr. Rockwell received the 2008 National Design Award for Interior Design from the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt. For more information, please visit www.rockwellgroup.com.

KaBOOM! is a national non-profit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Since 1995, KaBOOM! has used its innovative community-build model to bring together business and community interests to construct more than 1,600 new playgrounds, skateparks, sports fields and ice rinks across North America. KaBOOM! also offers a variety of resources, including an online community, regional and national trainings, grants, publications and the KaBOOM! National Campaign for Play, which includes Playful City USA and the Playmaker Network – a national network of individual advocates for play. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., KaBOOM! also has offices in Chicago, Atlanta and San Mateo, Calif. www.kaboom.org.

City of New York Parks & Recreation is the steward of more than 29,000 acres of land--14 percent of New York City--including more than 4,000 individual properties ranging from Yankee Stadium and Central Park to community gardens and GreenStreets. We operate more than 800 athletic fields and nearly 1,000 playgrounds. We manage four major stadia, 550 tennis courts, 52 public pools, 48 recreational facilities, 17 nature centers, 13 golf courses and 14 miles of beaches. We care for 1,200 monuments and 22 historic house museums. We look after 600,000 street trees, and two million more in parks. We are New York City's principal providers of athletic facilities. We are home to free concerts, world-class sports events and cultural festivals. For more information about Parks, visit our website: www.nyc.gov/parks.