



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

rockwellgroup



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**BROOKLYN TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF A CREATIVE
DESTINATION FOR KIDS – IMAGINATION PLAYGROUND IN A BOX – AT
THE BROWNSVILLE PLAYGROUND ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH**

*Architect David Rockwell, in Partnership with KaBOOM!,
the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and Local Officials
Present an Expandable Collection of Imagination Playground's Signature
Loose Parts to Encourage Creative, Collaborative Kids' Play*

July 9, 2008 (New York, NY) – On Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at 12pm, architect David Rockwell of Rockwell Group, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe, KaBOOM! CEO and co-founder Darell Hammond, Brooklyn Councilman Charles Barron and other local dignitaries will unveil the first-ever **Imagination Playground in a BOX** – a new children's play space at the Brownsville Recreation Center playground, located at Linden Boulevard between Mother Gaston Boulevard and Christopher Street in Brooklyn, NY. Sixty children from the Brownsville Summer Camp will be on hand to see the introduction of their new play space and of course, to play! This installation is funded by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to bringing play back into the lives of children, as part of their mission to ensure that every child has access to a great place to play within walking distance. Councilman Barron has been working extensively to transform the Brownsville Recreational Center and its adjacent park into a vibrant, new area for neighborhood children.

“It’s so exciting to see the concept of creative play actually become a reality in New York,” said David Rockwell, founder and CEO of Rockwell Group. We are incredibly grateful to KaBOOM!, the New York City Parks & Recreation Department, and Brownsville’s local officials for working with us to make these play opportunities available to the children in this community and beyond.”

“Imagination Playground in a Box allows David Rockwell’s revolutionary concept of unstructured play to visit children anywhere,” said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Thanks to our partnership with the Rockwell Group and KaBOOM!, children from Brownsville can now experience the wonders of the Imagination Playground in their own neighborhood. Imagination Playground in a BOX is the perfect example of how creative public-private partnerships and innovative design can improve our parks and enrich the lives of the City’s kids.”

David Rockwell 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. Rockwell Group has worked closely with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation on the initiative, working together to create the permanent flagship site at Burling Slip in lower Manhattan. It was designed to allow kids to use their creativity to play freely with loose and found parts, and other equipment as well as water and sand, rather than prescribed activities. These elements will enable children to play in an intuitive way: build something, tear it down, and start all over again. KaBOOM! joined forces with Rockwell Group and the city earlier this summer to bring the signature aspects of Imagination Playground around the country with Imagination Playground in a BOX.

“By investing in this prototype, KaBOOM! is investing in the future of play. We can’t wait to make Imagination Playground in a BOX available to communities across the country and even the world. They’re a great way to engage kids and communities in creative play,” said Darell Hammond, CEO and co-founder of KaBOOM!. Although KaBOOM! is best known for using volunteers to build more traditional playgrounds, the organization is funding the launch of this prototype to inspire more child directed and child initiated play elements to ensure that every child has access to a great place to play.

Based on the play value concepts of the fixed-site Burling Slip location, the Imagination Playground in a BOX kit comes with two colorful containers on wheels, reminiscent of trunks full of treasures. The sides and tops 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, karabiner clips and traffic cones, all of which may be layered into an existing playground.

The Brownsville site will be open daily from 8:00 a.m. to dusk throughout the summer. There will be over 150 foam blocks of various sizes and shapes in the BOXes, and tires full of sand and water set up permanently outside. Play Associates will be on hand daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to oversee the introduction of the parts at the start of the day and to put them away at dusk, as well as to maintain them throughout the day.

Rockwell Group is an award winning, cross-disciplinary 250-person architecture and design firm specializing in cultural, hospitality, retail, product, and set design. Founded in 1984 in New York by David Rockwell, 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 New York, W Union Square, Adour Alain Ducasse at the St. Regis in New York, the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, Nobu restaurants worldwide, and groundbreaking set designs for Broadway productions of "Hairspray" and "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels". Rockwell Group is currently at work on Canyon Ranch Living in Miami, the Elinor Bunin-Munroe Film Center at Lincoln Center, the Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, and interior and brand conceptualization work for the new JetBlue terminal at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. 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 1,400 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.

New York City Department of 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.

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