

## HC YMCA awarded \$15,000 Let's Play Grant

Written by George Browning  
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Dr Pepper Snapple Group (DPS) and national non-profit KaBOOM! awarded the YMCA of Harrison County a \$15,000 Let's Play Community Construction Grant announced January 11.

The grant is part of Let's Play, a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids and families active nationwide. In 2011, as part of Let's Play, Dr Pepper Snapple Group made a \$15 million, three-year commitment to KaBOOM!, the national non-profit saving play by ensuring there is a great place to play within walking distance of every child. Together through Let's Play, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and KaBOOM! will build or fix up 2,000 playgrounds by the end of 2013, benefiting an estimated five million children across North America.

"The YMCA of Harrison County is continuously working with the community to expand our positive outreach and find new ways in which to help our community", said Youth and Families Director, Elizabeth Whittinghill. "With this funding and a \$19,823.75 Access to Recreation grant from the Harrison County Community Foundation, we will be installing a community playground".

This playground will be a great asset to our community. The Y believes all kids have the potential and should have the opportunity to discover who they are, express themselves and be nurtured in all their possibility. A playground like this will do just that by keeping the children active physically, boosting them mentally and spiritually, reinforcing positive character values, building confidence and encouraging them to help others do the same while also providing a place where all families and children can come together to play and socialize.

We have selected a playground model that serves ages two to twelve so that it serves as many children as possible, compared to playgrounds for age ranges two to five or six to twelve which restrict access to the other ages. We are aiming to have the playground completed by the end of June of this year.

Unstructured, child-directed play has been proven to help kids develop physically, socially and cognitively, yet today's kids have less time and fewer opportunities to play than any previous generation. Through Let's Play grants and projects in 2011, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and KaBOOM! built or improved 528 playgrounds, benefitting an estimated 1.3 million children during the lifetime of the playgrounds. People are encouraged to visit Let's Play at [www.LetsPlay.com](http://www.LetsPlay.com) to join the conversation and learn how to apply for the various available grants to make their communities more active and playful.

### About Grantee Name

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of Harrison County engages men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

### About Let's Play

Let's Play is a community partnership led by Dr Pepper Snapple Group (NYSE: DPS) to get kids and families active nationwide.

The first Let's Play initiative is a \$15 million, three-year commitment to KaBOOM!, the national non-profit that's saving play.

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end of 2013, benefiting an estimated five million children across North America. For more information, visit [LetsPlay.com](http://LetsPlay.com) or [Facebook.com/LetsPlay](https://www.facebook.com/LetsPlay).

### About Access to Recreation

In 2007, Harrison County was awarded a \$411,000 grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to fund new amenities and improvements in our county and state parks. Provisions in the grant required an endowment be created that would maintain these projects and help pay for continuing improvements. Kellogg funds, HCCF match and donations from people who believe everyone should have a chance to enjoy our great outdoors, helped create the Access to Recreation Fund. This fund will provide several thousand dollars each year to keep adding accessible features throughout the county,