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KaBOOM! and General Motors bring kid-designed, community-built play space to Wayside

AUSTIN, TEXAS (October 8, 2018)—This December, Wayside: Altamira Academy (AMA) is getting a space shuttle. Or maybe a castle or pirate ship.

Thanks to a special grant from KaBOOM! and funding partner General Motors, scholars at the pre-K to 5th grade elementary school will have a unique opportunity to design the playground of their dreams—and make their vision a reality with the help of community volunteers.

The project is made possible by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to ensuring all kids have great, safe places to play.

According to KaBOOM!, 80 percent of elementary school principals report that recess has a positive impact on academic achievement, yet only one in four children gets 60 minutes of physical activity or active play every day.

“Hundreds of kids in Austin will have another great, safe place to play thanks to General Motors and Wayside: AMA,” said Amnastee’ Graves, KaBOOM! Project Manager. “I’m excited to work with these partners for the next several weeks and help build a play space where these kids can have fun, learn, explore and just be kids.”

The playground is slated to be built December 1 at Wayside Schools’ newest campus and the network’s third permanent location in Southeast Austin, which is home to both Wayside: AMA and Wayside: Sci-Tech High School. While the campus does have ample open outdoor space, it does not yet have a designated playground for younger scholars.

“Many of our scholars have never had playground equipment at school,” said Michelle McCurdy, whose two children attend Wayside: AMA. “Parents and scholars alike are so excited to have a safe place to play and socialize outside of the classroom. The kids just want to have fun, and the adults know how important this playscape will be for the physical and emotional wellbeing of our children. We can hardly wait.”

The community-led project will officially kick off with a design workshop on October 11, when scholars will be asked to draw pictures of their dream play space and present wish lists to parents and the planning committee. From there, a community meeting will be held to implement their ideas into the finalized building plans.

“Creating safe environments for children to prosper and thrive is one of the reasons General Motors is proud to partner with KaBOOM!,” said Heidi Magyar, director of Corporate Giving at

GM. “This investment serves as a foundation to help improve the quality of life for children within the Austin community.”

Finally, on December 1, more than 150 community volunteers—including scholars, parents, and team members from Wayside, KaBOOM!, and General Motors—will come together to build the playground. Construction will be completed that day and the space will be ready for use on December 4.

“We are thrilled to have the support of KaBOOM! and General Motors to provide scholars with a playscape from which to climb, swing, and use their imaginations,” said Interim Wayside: AMA Principal Lauren Whitfield. “This project provides an opportunity for our scholars to explore their creativity and dream big—and perhaps most importantly, to witness the realization of those dreams through teamwork and service.”

For more information about the project or to volunteer, please contact Halley Cade at hcade@waysideschools.org.

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About Wayside Schools

Wayside Schools is an open-enrollment, tuition-free Pre-K3–12 public charter school network that provides over 2,200 scholars across its five Southeast Austin campuses with an International Baccalaureate (IB) education. The network is made up of three elementary schools, one secondary school, and one high school. Its mission is to prepare scholars to be college-ready, community-engaged, global citizens through a rigorous, community-enriched education guided by the IB framework and personalized instruction.

About KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is the national nonprofit dedicated to the bold goal of ensuring that all children, particularly the 16 million American children living in poverty, get the balance of active play they need to become healthy and successful adults. KaBOOM! creates and catalyzes great places the play, inspires, empowers, and leads play advocates, and educates and elevates the societal conversation about the importance of play in children’s lives. KaBOOM! has been a powerful champion for play since its founding in 1996, working with partners to build, improve, and open more than 15,000 playgrounds, engage more than 1,000,000 volunteers, and serve more than 6,600,000 children.

About General Motors

General Motors is a global company committed to delivering safer, better and more sustainable ways for people to get around. General Motors, its subsidiaries and its joint venture entities sell vehicles under the Chevrolet, Buick, GMC, Cadillac, Holden, Baojun, Wuling and Jiefang brands. More information on the company and its subsidiaries, including OnStar, a global leader in vehicle safety and security services, and Maven, its personal mobility brand, can be found at <http://www.gm.com>.

