

For Immediate Release

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Washtenaw County Health Department Seeks Feedback on New Kids' Play Space
Online survey open through Feb. 18

YPSILANTI, Mich., February 4, 2019 – The Washtenaw County Health Department is seeking feedback for a [new play space](#) at their Ypsilanti offices. Residents can have a say in what features are included through [an online survey](#), or at a display at the Health Department at 555 Towner Street, Ypsilanti 48198, both open through Feb. 18.

The Washtenaw County Health Department is thrilled to create this play space through the KaBOOM! [Play Everywhere Challenge](#), supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. KaBOOM! is the national non-profit dedicated to ensuring all kids have access to great, safe places to play. The Play Everywhere Challenge is one of their initiatives that transforms public spaces and creates opportunities for active play where kids need it most.

“We know that our physical building doesn’t currently reflect how welcoming and innovative our staff and programs truly are.” says Susan Cerniglia, community health promotion administrator at the Washtenaw County Health Department. “We hope to create opportunities for kids and people of all ages and abilities to be active in an entirely unexpected place.”

Thousands of local community members visit the Health Department site, just east of downtown Ypsilanti, for health services like WIC, immunizations, help with insurance, or to visit the neighboring state department of health and human services. There are fewer opportunities for play and recreation in Ypsilanti and southeast Washtenaw than in other parts of the county. This project will increase opportunities for all residents to live as healthfully as possible.

Proposed play features include outdoor musical instruments, a play farmers market, a seesaw that’s accessible for children with disabilities, and interactive sidewalk art.

“We want to transform the way we all think about and interact with our public space and services,” says Cerniglia. “We need input to make it the best space possible for our community.”

The Play Everywhere Challenge is part of the broader *Built to Play* initiative led by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, which provides more opportunities for free play throughout Western New York and Southeast Michigan. The Challenge will award grant winners a total of \$720,000 to create lasting, scalable design installations that will provide more opportunities to play for the kids who need it most.

The Washtenaw County Health Department is partnering with Washtenaw County's facilities and administration, Parks and Recreation Commission, Office of Community and Economic Development, and Community Mental Health, as well as the City of Ypsilanti.

Learn more about the project and find the survey at www.washtenaw.org/play. The play space is expected to be complete by August 2019.



Proposed design for a play space at the Washtenaw County Health Department.

About the Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two

areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his Buffalo Bills franchise. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson requested that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. The Foundation has a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit www.rcwjrf.org.

About KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is the national non-profit dedicated to giving all kids –especially those living in poverty – the childhood they deserve through great, safe places to play. KaBOOM! inspires communities to make play the easy choice and works to drive the national discussion about the importance of PLAYces. KaBOOM! has collaborated with partners to build or improve more than 17,000 playspaces, engage over 1.5 million volunteers and serve nearly 10 million kids. To learn why play matters for all kids, visit kaboom.org and join the conversation at twitter.com/kaboom, facebook.com/kaboom and instagram.com/kaboom. #playmatters #PLAYceforKids

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