

## **Forest Heights named Playful City USA Community**

Forest Heights was recently given the distinction of Playful City USA Community for its efforts to increase play opportunities for children.

Playful City USA is a national recognition program that honors municipalities that find ways to keep youth active and healthy. The program is led by KaBOOM!, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that advocates for a play areas to be available for every child in the U.S.

Forest Heights was one of six Maryland municipalities that were recognized in 2013. The others were Baltimore, Capitol Heights, Greenbelt, Laurel and Takoma Park.

According to Forest Heights staff, the town was chosen in part because of its developing sustainability plan, which aims to address the needs of children in the community to make the area more walkable and recreational-oriented.

Town Administrator Vern Haefele said in a statement that some ideas in the plan include new play areas for toddlers and senior exercise stations for residents.

“We are currently holding monthly workshops regarding various health issues, and sponsoring a Walk for Health program each Monday and Friday morning, in addition to providing information on eating the right foods,” he said. “Our goal is to help change lifestyles and promote healthy living.”

The Playful City USA distinction will make Forest Heights, and other municipalities named a Playful City USA, eligible for \$15,000, \$20,000 and \$30,000 grants for playground-type construction projects, according to Haefele.

See the whole article as reported by [digross@gazette.net](mailto:digross@gazette.net) in

<http://www.gazette.net/article/20130516/NEWS/130519400/1010/forest-heights-named-playful-city-usa-community&template=gazette>