

Local & Region

A2 | Sunday, August 14, 2016 | The Vail Daily

Playful place

Gypsum nets grant, prepares to build new playground

By Pam Boyd
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GYPSUM — Gypsum is already and officially a playful place, but come Sept. 24 there will be even more fun to be had in the community.

On that date, the town wants about 200 volunteers to converge to build a new playground, compliments of the Playful City USA organization, the Colorado Health Foundation and a number of local partners.

“This has been a long time coming,” said Gypsum special events coordinator Krista DeHerrera.

She said the town first explored idea of getting a Kaboom grant for a new park in the Stratton Flats/Habitat for Humanity residential area more than a year ago. Another community has selected in the initial application process, but then a representative from Kaboom contacted the town in July to say the Colorado Health Foundation



had agreed to fund a new project. Gypsum’s application was ready and waiting, and town was able to forge some important partnerships to take advantage of the grant dollars.

According to DeHerrera, the park location fits perfectly with the Kaboom mission because kids who live in the Stratton Flats

and Habitat homes don’t have a nearby play area. She noted that as part of its development approval, Stratton Flats was required to build a playground when it reached the 100 homes threshold. What’s more, a tract of land in the neighborhood has already been

This graphic depicts the new playground equipment, chosen by local kids, that will be installed during a community build event planned for Sept. 24 in Gypsum.

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

PLAYGROUND, A12

DID YOU KNOW...

GYPSUM IS AN OFFICIAL PLAYFUL CITY USA

Playful City USA is a national recognition program sponsored by Humana Foundation in partnership with Kaboom that honors cities, towns and communities across America that are taking bold steps to ensure that all children, especially the 16 million American kids living in poverty, have easy access to balanced and active play in their communities.

Through this program, Playful City USA honorees are recognized for making a commitment to transform their communities to become more playable by developing unique local action plans to increase the quantity and quality of play in their community.



OUR PICKS FOR THE TOP TWO ACTIVITIES IN THE VAIL VALLEY TODAY

1 Shop at the farmers market — The 11th annual Vail Farmers’ Market runs from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. today and every Sunday through Oct. 2, with more than 135 tents selling good ranging from accessories, clothing and jewelry, to artisan crafts, to wine, spirits, produce and prepared food. For more details, visit www.vailfarmersmarket.com.

2 Explore art studios in Red Cliff — Get a peek at the thriving art community in Red Cliff during the 18th Red Cliff Studio Tour today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This year, eight artists are participating, displaying their work within their private studios and, for the first time, on the second floor of Mango’s Mountain Grill. Learn more on Page B2, or visit www.redcliffstudiotour.com.

Vail Daily

Founded by Jim Pavelich & Jon Van Housen

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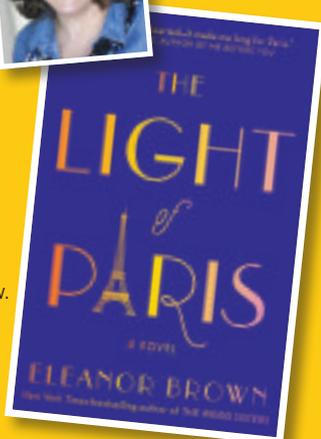
Eleanor Brown,
author of *The Light of Paris*

• Wednesday, August 17th

• 6pm

• Tickets \$10, includes appetizers

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PLAYGROUND

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designated for a playground. When the town learned about the grant dollars, it approached the Stratton Flats developers and proposed a deal — if they would dedicate the park land to the Stratton Flats Homeowners Association, the town would cut their park development requirement from \$60,000 to \$50,000. The dollars and the land donation are being applied to the Kaboom project and local kids will get a bigger park on an expedited schedule.

“This is a really blessing for this neighborhood,” said DeHerrera. “They are getting twice the park that they would have gotten and they are getting it 10 to 15 years earlier.”

DESIGNED BY EXPERTS

Once Gypsum forged partnerships with Stratton Flats Homes, the Stratton Flats Homeowners Association and Habitat for Humanity Vail Valley to build the playground, it turned to a group of experts to plan the amenity — about 25 local kids.

During a session hosted by Kaboom the kids described what they wanted in a playground. After the younger set had their say, parents were asked to offer their ideas. The resulting 50-by-50-foot playground features kid-approved climbing structures, slides and swings. Additionally, another approximately 50-by-50-foot adjacent area will have a number of adult fitness structures. The play area and the fitness area will be bridged by a shaded picnic area.

With plans in hand, the town is now looking for a volunteer corps to build the playground. That will happen during a building blitz planned in late September.

ALL HANDS ON BOARD

DeHerrera said about 200 volunteers



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Gypsum kids draw their ideas for a perfect playground during the Kaboom design event in July. Those ideas will take concrete form during a community build day on Sept. 24.

will be needed to build the park. The work will begin on Sept. 22 when the equipment truck arrives and volunteers will unload the unassembled playground. Additional prep work is planned Sept. 23 and then build day will begin at 8 a.m. Sept. 24.

“You don’t have to have any construction skills to help,” said DeHerrera. “Everyone can play an important role.”

Some people will be assigned to the construction crew while others will work for the food committee because everyone will be served breakfast and lunch on site Sept. 24. Additionally, there will be free child care provided during the build so volunteer parents don’t have to make arrangements for their kids. That means other volunteers will be tasked with playing with kids during construction time.

Anyone interested in participating with the park project is invited to sign up at www.townofgypsum.com. For additional information, email kdeherrera@townofgypsum.com or call 970-524-1727.

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