York is a winner in 'Play Everywhere Challenge'

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The grant funding will be used for York's Playful Sidewalks.

York was one of 50 winners from across the nation selected to receive money as part of KaBOOM!'s "Play Everywhere Challenge," according to a news release from the nonprofit organization.

"York's Playful Sidewalks" project was entered by Eat Play Breathe York and the YMCA of York and York County. It involves painting artwork on sidewalks to encourage movement, as well as bus shelters equipped with musical instruments, swings and games as a way to encourage play among children and adults.

"By adding play elements along routes to schools, health clinics, food stores, and other frequently visited locations, kids have an increased opportunity to have fun and be social," wrote Cori Strathmeyer, director of healthy living with YMCA of York and York County and chairwoman of Eat Play Breathe York, a health initiative in the city of York.

York will be receiving $45,000 for the project, said Priya Madrecki of KaBOOM!

Work has been underway. Students designed and painted sidewalks in the city last year to encourage children to play. Some, for example, are near Central Market and Martin Library.

In the next round, they plan to have professional artists create the drawings to encourage play throughout the city. Officials are working on where to place the playful bus shelter, Strathemeyer said.

Normally, residents waiting for the bus stand there with nothing to do, said Jim Gross, director of the city's department of public works. But with the planned bus shelter, bus riders will be able to play while they wait.

"It's certainly a unique approach to play," he said.
York was one of 50 winners from across the nation selected to receive money as part of KaBOOM!'s "Play Everywhere Challenge." "York's Playful Sidewalks" project was entered by Eat Play Breathe York and the YMCA of York and York County. (Photo: File)

The project is expected to have a trickle-down effect, such as encouraging children and adults to walk more, prompting more mingling in the community and spurring residents to fix up sidewalks and neighborhoods.

Strathmeyer wrote that if York won grant funding from KaBOOM!, "we will also commission local artists to design and install 10 spectacular murals that encourage creativity, active play and a sense of wonder."

KaBOOM! received more than 1,000 applications for the $1 million competition. A panel of experts selected the winning projects, the news release states.

Strathemeyer said she is so grateful that KaBOOM! opted to fund the project.