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## Hancock Whitney, City of Pasadena, and KABOOM! Unveil New Community Playground in Pasadena

**(Pasadena, TX - April 20, 2023)** Today, Hancock Whitney Bank revealed a new playground at Pasadena Highlands Park, to ensure kids have a safe, inclusive place to play. Designed with input from area children, the project was built in a day in partnership with KABOOM!, the national nonprofit working to end playspace inequity, and the City of Pasadena. Pasadena community members and leaders joined the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Pasadena Highlands Park.

Through a data-driven process, KABOOM! and The City of Pasadena Parks Department identified the previously existing playground at Pasadena Highlands Park as a priority site, due to its dated and unsafe equipment, such as metal slides that become dangerously hot in the summer.

The project is a part of Hancock Whitney's ongoing commitment to create opportunities for people and the communities the bank serves. Supporting the bank's commitment to financial education, the playspace incorporates basic math and financial literacy concepts into playful learning experiences.

"At Hancock Whitney, we believe kids can be the catalyst to building stronger communities," said Hancock Whitney Regional President Larry Stephens. "We're committed to helping kids achieve the futures they deserve by creating safe places to play and promoting physical and financial health. In partnership with KABOOM!, the City of Pasadena, and local community partners, this initiative offers a playful learning space that provides access to financial education concepts vital to financial wellness."

More than a hundred volunteers from Hancock Whitney, City of Pasadena, and the local community transformed the park, by repainting the existing basketball court and installing new play elements, such as slides, climbers, and swings as well as math and literacy games. A 171-foot mural by Houston-based artist, Mark De Leon, to be painted the following week, will further enhance the site.

The state-of-the-art playground will provide a place to gather and make memories together for thousands of children, families and neighbors in a community that is predominantly Hispanic and low-income. The refurbishment will also allow for programming to expand to Highlands Park, such as special events, summer camps and family picnics.

Playground planning began in January 2023, with design sessions in which neighborhood children and adults shared their input and discussed goals for the space. Consistent with Hancock Whitney's goal of introducing financial education concepts to children, attendees participated in a budgeting experience on Design Day, challenging students to "build" a playground while staying within budget. Area children also participated in the mural design session, and their ideas will be reflected in the mural. Additionally, Hancock Whitney announced plans for ongoing financial education opportunities for the local Pasadena community in partnership with The Bridgepath, a local nonprofit organization

that provides financial education to low- to moderate-income (LMI) individuals, families and small business owners.

“Playgrounds are an iconic part of childhood. They’re not only where kids collect some of their best memories, but also where crucial skills are developed that nurture their physical, mental, and emotional well-being,” said Lysa Ratliff, CEO of KABOOM!. “KABOOM! was thrilled to work with Hancock Whitney and the City of Pasadena to bring to life the new playspace at Pasadena Highlands Park and ensure that kids in Pasadena have a place designed just for them, where they can play, learn, and unlock their greatest potential.”

KABOOM! uses a data-informed, systems-level approach to identify communities, particularly communities of color, that are experiencing significant playspace inequities and gaps in access to quality recreational areas to ensure playspaces are built where there is the greatest need.

“Children everywhere deserve a fun, safe, and robust area to play with their families and friends, said City of Pasadena Parks and Recreation Director Jed Aplaca. “We are thrilled to have this new playspace at Pasadena Highlands Park, which is slated to connect to the Vince Bayou Greenway Trail providing a safe connection for pedestrians and cyclists in the area. We are grateful for companies like Hancock Whitney and KABOOM! for demonstrating just how much can be done when like-minded, mission-driven entities come together to better our communities.”

“At Hancock Whitney, it’s our aim to be a committed community partner, providing investments like this one to enhance the places we call home,” said Stephens. “We look forward to watching the local community enjoy this playground and are excited to continue engaging with Pasadena residents to help this region grow and thrive.”

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### **About Hancock Whitney**

Since the late 1800s, Hancock Whitney has embodied core values of Honor & Integrity, Strength & Stability, Commitment to Service, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility. Hancock Whitney offices and financial centers in Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas offer comprehensive financial products and services, including traditional and online banking; commercial and small business banking; private banking; trust and investment services; healthcare banking; certain insurance services; and mortgage services. The company also operates a loan production office in Nashville, Tennessee. BauerFinancial, Inc., the nation’s leading independent bank rating and analysis firm, consistently recommends Hancock Whitney as one of America’s most financially sound banks. More information is available at [www.hancockwhitney.com](http://www.hancockwhitney.com).

### **About KABOOM!**

KABOOM! is the national nonprofit committed to ending playspace inequity – the reality that quality places to play are not available to every child, especially in communities of color. Since 1996, KABOOM! has partnered with kids and communities to create or transform 17,000+ playspaces and ensure that nearly 12 million kids have equitable access to the crucial benefits and opportunities that play spaces offer. In 2022, KABOOM! launched the 25 in 5 Initiative to End Playspace Inequity, the

\$250 million plan to accelerate its mission in 25 high-priority locations over five years. Learn more at [kaboom.org](http://kaboom.org) or join the conversation on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

### **About the City of Pasadena, Texas**

Rich in Texas history and community spirit, Pasadena is the second-largest city in the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area, with a population of 150K+. Located northwest of Galveston and south of the Houston Ship Channel, Pasadena's residents comprise a highly-skilled, dedicated and diverse workforce. Our city is home to the world-famous Strawberry Festival, the annual Pasadena Livestock Show & Rodeo, Armand Bayou Nature Center, El Jardin Beach, and a calendar full of family programs and events.