

Cheviot named a 'Playful City'

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(Photo: Kurt Backscheider/The Community Press)

CHEVIOT –

Cheviot is one of four Ohio cities recently named a 2015 Playful City USA community for its efforts to make it easy for all children to get active and balanced play.

The recognition program is sponsored by the Humana Foundation and administered through KaBoom, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing active play into the daily lives of children.

Cheviot Mayor Samuel Keller said city leaders are elated Cheviot was selected as a Playful City USA. He said the city is one of 241 communities in the United States to be recognized. In Ohio, Columbus, Akron and Piqua

are included.

The program honors communities that champion efforts to make play a priority through establishing policy initiatives, infrastructure investments and innovative programming," Keller said.

Caroline Statkus, the city's economic development director, said Cheviot is a family-friendly city and provides opportunities to make play inclusive and appealing to the whole family.

For the past three years, she said the city has participated in the WeThrive program through the Hamilton County Public Health District, encouraging wellness and fitness. As part of the program, she said the city has installed a 12-station fitness trail at Harvest Home Park, installed a bicycle rack at the Cheviot Municipal Pool and established two marked walking trails throughout the city.

Statkus said the city has also made improvements at Pioneer Park on Harrison Avenue, renovated the playground at the Cheviot Memorial Fieldhouse and painted hopscotch games on the pavement at both Harvest Home Park and the Fieldhouse.

Cheviot also received a \$45,828 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources this year to upgrade the playground at Harvest Home Park, she said. The Jerry Stautberg Memorial Fund, Cheviot Savings Bank and the Cheviot Westwood Community Association all pitched in to provide an additional 25 percent funding match for the playground renovation at Harvest Home Park, she said.

"From an economic development perspective, this designation (as a Playful City) helps us promote Cheviot as a great place to raise your family," Statkus said. "The city has been very successful in obtaining grant funds over the past few years for more recreational opportunities for our residents."

The selection criteria for the Playful City program includes demonstrating significant collaboration among nonprofit partners, foundations, municipal agencies, the business community and civic groups; exhibiting local governmental leadership on the cause of play; and expressing the ability and commitment to use data to address inequality through investment, policy change and programming.

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