



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Illinois**

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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF ILLINOIS LAUNCH ADDITIONAL
PLAYSTREETS TO GET CHICAGO CHILDREN MOVING**

City of Chicago Partnership Program Designed to Engage Children and Families in Active Play

Mayor Emanuel and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois launched a second round of PlayStreets today. This program is specifically designed to involve children and families throughout Chicago neighborhoods in active play. More than 50 PlayStreets events will take place this summer through Labor Day, benefiting more than 7,000 children across Chicago. The Active Transportation Alliance, World Sport Chicago and Local Initiatives Support Corporation Chicago (LISC) have worked in partnership to implement the program. They will work with grass roots community organizations to empower local residents to take back their streets for fun and fitness.

“By providing our young people with opportunities to begin or continue a healthy routine, they will have the tools they need to grow into healthy young adults,” said Mayor Emanuel. “Engaging in fun neighborhood activities keeps kids connected to their communities, while teaching them valuable skills that they will carry through the rest of their lives.”

At a PlayStreets event, the streets are closed off to traffic for a few hours and transformed into an urban oasis featuring sports, games, bounce houses, dancing, fitness classes and more. This year, PlayStreets events will be held in the East Garfield Park, Little Village, West Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Chicago Lawn, Brighton Park, Woodlawn, Quad Communities, North Lawndale, Pilsen, Washington Park and Near North as well as Near West neighborhoods of Chicago.

“The success of last year’s launch of PlayStreets prompted us to expand it to even more areas of Chicago this year,” said Karen Atwood, president for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. “As long-time partners with the Chicago Department of Public Health, it is a natural fit to join efforts to pursue our common goal of exposing residents, especially children, to the health benefits of exercise. And if we can do it in a block party-like atmosphere, right where they live, we are teaching the next generation that fun and fitness go hand in hand.”

PlayStreets is a key component of Healthy Chicago, the citywide public health agenda launched by Mayor Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in 2011 dedicated to transforming the health of the City through collaborative efforts and initiatives. It continues to serve as a blueprint for a focused approach by CDPH to implement policies and systems changes

to priorities.

“Every child deserves a place to play and be active,” said CDPH Commissioner Bechara Choucair, M.D. “Working with our partners at BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois, we are able to provide thousands of children with fun, safe activities that can enjoy with their families to get and stay healthy. Together, we are working to make Chicago the healthiest city in the nation.”

Community partners include: Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Beyond the Ball, Universidad Popular, West Humboldt Park Development Council, Storehouse Connect, Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance, Southwest Organizing Project, Near North Unity Program, Near West Side Community Development Corporation, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Gads Hill Center, Quad Communities Development Corporation.

A complete schedule of PlayStreets events can be found [here](#).

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