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Message from the President...

As we enter our second decade of promoting play, one of the most important aspects of a child's development, IPEMA members should be proud of its accomplishments and excited about the future. Our membership is strong, continuing to grow internationally, and is nicely balanced with play equipment and safety surfacing companies. We continue to show strong maturation with our committee activities. Both the equipment and surfacing certification committees meet quarterly to address important issues in an ongoing program improvement effort. Additionally, the new voiceofplay.com website and this informational IPEMA member e-



newsletter are fine examples of our public relations committee's efforts.

Looking back on our fall 2006 activities, we successfully recruited an outstanding Board of Advisors which continues to contribute informative articles covering topics of expertise to industry periodicals on behalf of IPEMA. We launched our "Voice of Play" website and continue to build informative content for consumers, while complimenting the traditional www.ipema.org website. Look for work to be completed this year on a "landing page" that will merge both the IPEMA and "Voice of Play" sites, so that we may better

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IPEMA Membership & Certification Dues Renewal

It's that time of year again and IPEMA has been hard at work for the members and the industry. As you know, we have been very active this past year with our various committees and here are just a few of the items IPEMA committees continue their work on:

Advocacy

IPEMA continues to monitor legislation related to the play industry. If a piece of legislation is determined to be relevant to the play industry, IPEMA will commence grassroots lobbying efforts on behalf of its members.

Affiliations

IPEMA has met with both the NRPA and the ASLA organizations and is currently exploring mutually beneficial projects with both organizations.

Education

IPEMA seeks directly related information and research on how free play helps our children improve academic excellence. A recent book entitled Recess: Its Role in Education and Development by author Anthony Pelligrini makes the point several times that elimination of recess in our elementary schools can actually be harmful to our educational system.

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Message from the President *continued*

reach our consumers and end-users with the important materials promoting play and our industry.

Additionally, this past December we spoke at the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) conference in Phoenix, AZ to state legislators from all-over the United States on outstanding research that supports play as a solution to fighting childhood obesity, significantly contributing to higher intelligence levels, being an important developer of lifelong social skills, as well as revealing the greatest secret about free play. This effort was coordinated with Common Good, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is “Restoring Common Sense To America.” You can learn more about their play efforts by visiting www.commongood.org. Let us all hope that our federal and state legislators continue to hear our message and vote for increased funding towards creating more free play opportunities for our children. As an aside, it appears as if Texas may be leading the way with pending legislation to mandate recess as an important part of their elementary school education program.

This coming May our board of directors will meet in Virginia during the ASTM committee week and will be discussing important developments including scheduling our second membership meeting and social at the NRPA Conference

in Indianapolis. Both Executive Director Denise Calabrese and I feel that with the overwhelming success of our social last year in Seattle, another membership social would be an awesome way to celebrate the year after a brief, focused and graphic membership meeting. Look for more news on this exciting event in our summer newsletter issue.

As we all gear up for the upcoming “busy season,” try to remember that our work is critical in helping society develop active, healthy, intelligent and social “players.” We know that free play leads to increased caloric burn that may result in healthier children. We also know that “Researchers have discovered that play is related to greater creativity and imagination and even to higher reading levels and IQ scores. Based on the research evidence, a new equation is in order: PLAY = LEARNING” (Hirsch-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2003). So go spread the word and grow our industry! I personally wish all of our members much success this coming year and look forward to seeing many of you in Virginia and then Indiana.

Best Wishes –

Tom Norquist, IPEMA President

Playlink & Free Play Network

PLACES OF PLAY ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM NOW OPEN FOR COMMENTS

What makes a place a good place for play? How can we avoid replicating more places of woe in future? Join the discussion at : <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/playlink/exhibition/woepossibility/>

Put your questions to our team of expert facilitators:

Phil Doyle, Play Development Manager Tower Hamlets and PLAYLINK Associate Sue Gutteridge, Play Services Service Manager, Stirling Helen Woolley, Sheffield University Department of Landscape and CABA Space Enabler Bernard Spiegel, Principal, PLAYLINK

See also: PLACES OF WOE: PLACES OF POSSIBILITY ONLINE EXHIBITION- NOW LIVE

Go to: <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/playlink/placesforplay/>

If you are signing on for the first time, CLICK the link below to record your contact details. To send your details, go to: <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/playlink/contacts.htm>

Most Recent Report finds PVC as Building Material is Considered Neutral

The Vinyl Institute noted in February 2007 that the final report of a U.S. Green Building Council panel on PVC (vinyl) reaffirmed the conclusions of its earlier draft report that PVC should not be the subject of a negative credit in the Council's LEED rating system.

"This is the right decision," said Tim Burns, president of the Vinyl Institute. The report, by the Council's Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC), said materials-related credits are a "blunt instrument" that could steer designers to choose materials with a more negative life-cycle impact. The draft report issued in December 2004 reached a similar conclusion.

The technical committee also found that data gaps frustrated its efforts to reach general conclusions about materials. While thousands of studies have been conducted on PVC, and its health and environmental profile is well established, the report recognized that there are major data gaps with respect to many competing materials.

"The report of the committee was correct in stating that there are no simple 'yes' or 'no' answers to assessing the desirability of different building materials," Burns said. "We agree with many of the recommendations of the technical committee relating to how materials are assessed in LEED. Specifically, we agree with the need for integrated methods for material evaluation rather than passing judgment on a particular credit for a particular material."

At the same time, Burns expressed strong concern that in some areas the committee appeared to have made assumptions and jumped to conclusions in cases where there were little or no data.

For more information, visit www.vinylnewsservice.net.

Another interesting piece of information that can be found at this site is "The Benefits of Vinyl," a four-minute clip with Dr. Patrick Moore.

Fractures in New Zealand Elementary School Settings

CHRISTINE M. RUBIE-DAVIES, PhD

MICHAEL A. R. TOWNSEND, PhD

BACKGROUND: There is a need for greater international understanding of student safety in schools. This New Zealand study investigated the causes and school location of fractures sustained by students attending elementary school, with special emphasis on the types of fractures sustained following falls from playground equipment of various heights.

METHODS: Over a 1-year period, 76 participating schools (with a combined roll of over 25,000 students) completed a questionnaire about the nature and circumstances of student fractures sustained during regular school hours.

RESULTS: Some 118 students sustained a total of 131 fractures. Injuries from playground equipment were no more frequent than those from general activities at school, and most were sustained in falls from heights less than 59 inches. Most fractures were to the upper limbs. Fractures were found to vary by gender and school size.

CONCLUSIONS: The results are discussed in terms of the conditions and policies present in local schools, and the tension that exists in maintaining safety while offering appropriate challenges to students. Improvements in school safety may be more likely to result from a greater focus on the way that students interact at school, rather than on modifications to playground equipment.

Citation: Rubie-Davies CM, Townsend MAR. Fractures in New Zealand elementary school settings. *J Sch Health*. 2007; 77: 36-40.

To read the entire article, please visit Documents at www.ipema.org.

Surfacing Committee Review & Update

By Ted Illjes, Surfacing Certification Chair, Zeager Bros.

IPEMA sponsors the certification program for Playground Surfacing. IPEMA is confident that compliance with the ASTM F1292 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment and, for Engineered Wood Fiber ASTM F2075 Standard Specification for Engineered Wood Fiber for Use as a Playground Safety Surface Under Around Playground Equipment (This Standard provides specifications for sieve size, presence of tramp metal, and heavy metal contamination). For Unitary Surfacing IPEMA certifies the Training Program for Crew Chief of Field Manufacturer Unitary Surfacing.

The purpose of this certification program is to assure the consumer, by the presence of a certification logo(s) and listing on the IPEMA website that representative samples of the products bearing the logo(s) have been tested and are in compliance with the applicable requirements of ASTM F1292, Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment, and for engineered wood fiber, also, ASTM F2075, Standard Specification for Engineered Wood Fiber for use as a Playground Safety Surface Under and Around Playground Equipment, independently validated in accordance with ASTM E1906 Standard Guide for General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems.

As sponsor and administrator of the program, IPEMA utilizes Detroit Testing Laboratory, Inc. (DTL) as independent validator to perform inspections and tests and review manufacturer's records on a periodic basis. Surface systems are tested for compliance with all applicable portions of the ASTM F1292 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation Under and Around Playground Equipment and this Procedural Guide for IPEMA's Certification for Playground Surfacing, and for engineered wood fiber, ASTM F2075, Standard Specification for Engineered Wood Fiber for use as a Playground Safety Surface Under and Around Playground Equipment which provides standards for sizing, metal contamination, and heavy metal impurities.

The program is open to all entities that offer playground-surfacing systems for sale. Participation in the program is on a voluntary basis. All surfacing bearing a certified designation manufactured or directly marketed by the program licensee must meet the program requirements.

The most recent update to the Surfacing Certification Program was the incorporation of the Hazardous Metal Test portion of ASTM F2075 Engineered Wood Fiber Standard and the inclusion of certifying the Training Program of the Crew Chief of Field Manufacturer Unitary installation crews.

Certified Equipment Endures Hurricane Katrina



A volunteer in New Orleans shortly after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, came across this piece of equipment made by Little Tikes MaxPlay. They were in awe of the total devastation of the school that sits next to nearly perfect piece of play equipment.

Equipment Committee Update

Any entity that offers public playground equipment for sale may participate in this voluntary program in accordance with IPEMA's Equipment Certification Program License Agreement and Procedural Guide. Products are tested according to ASTM F 1487 and CAN/CSA-Z614-03 (excluding clauses 9.8, 10, 11) Children's Playspaces and Equipment by IPEMA's validator, Detroit Testing Laboratory, an independent, accredited, employee-owned testing laboratory that provides a complete range of technical and developmental services.

Every year, IPEMA's Equipment Certification Committee holds six three-day meetings, one every other month. The purpose of the committee is to administer the program.

Dues Renewal *continued*

Marketing and Communications

The Communications Committee continues to retain the services of Euro RSCG Magnet, a public relations/marketing firm in Pittsburgh, to assist IPEMA in developing a brand for the organization and to help promote the value of play to various constituents. Recently, the committee launched the website www.voiceofplay.com. This website includes:

- Information about the physical, social, emotional and cognitive benefits of play
- Playground certification and safety standards
- A resource kit for parents
- An interactive opportunity to ask questions to our independent play experts

The Communications Committee continues to develop rich content for the new web portal while promoting the value of play. These member volunteers are very active and continue to work on the plan of action developed towards the branding effort. Be sure to review our strong board of advisors and look for several upcoming articles in industry magazines written by these well known and respected advisors on behalf of IPEMA.

Certification

The certification committees continue to promote the value of product certification to the applicable ASTM standards. Both the equipment and surfacing committees have recently renewed contracts with Detroit Testing Laboratories as the program validation. The committees meet regularly to

The committee provides detailed forms to help guide participants in their written and graphic product submittal process. The validator is the sole judge as to whether the information provided is adequate to validate products or if additional information or tests are needed. Upon successful completion of the validation process, the participant, in order to maintain its IPEMA product certification status, must retest a minimum of 20 percent of its validated products each calendar year. This ensures that each participant's products are tested at least once every five years; facilities are re-evaluated annually.

For more information regarding the IPEMA Certification Program, please contact the Certification Coordinator at certification@ipema.org or Equipment Certification Chair, Lloyd Reese at lreese@ltcps.com.

review standards and ensure that the certification programs meet the expectations of the industry.

IPEMA members continue to support the ASTM standards development process and look towards continuing to spread the word on how important play is in developing our children. We look for 2007 to be a break through year in mainstream media coverage on the positive aspects of free play helping keep our children at the top of their game in the areas of physical fitness and mental acuity.

In closing, we hope this past year was a good year for your business and promise to continue to expand our efforts towards helping society better understand the value of play. We are grateful to our board members who have invested much time and effort on behalf of IPEMA and to our management company out of Harrisburg, PA who continue to administrate and promote IPEMA.

Your 2007 dues invoice was due April 1st, but if for some reason you did not receive it or have any questions, please contact Amy Bell, financial & database manager at admin@ipema.org or by calling 717-238-1744.

We appreciate your continued membership and support. Let us all work together in 2007 towards making the world a better place through play.

IPEMA 2007 Work Plan

Have you ever wondered what IPEMA has planned for the upcoming year or how our budget is managed? Each year the board of directors dedicates one board meeting to discussing the work plan and goals for the upcoming year. Please see what is in store for IPEMA in 2007!

Membership

Solicit members of IPEMA who do not participate and ask them what issues are important to them.

Find reasons for more members to get involved.

Invite guest speakers to membership meetings.

Increase membership in IPEMA.

Marketing and Public Relations

Promote the value of play to the public.

Develop a web portal on play.

Create a member newsletter.

Education

Conduct research on industry issues and publish those results.

Create an “ask the expert” column on the website for consumers.

Hold web seminars.

Continue providing quarterly sales report to participants

Advocacy

Lobby at the state and federal level on behalf of the industry.

Take a leadership role in addressing special interest issues through fact-finding.

Certification Programs

Expand current certification participation.

Expand certification to include other product areas.

Affiliations

Develop affiliations with other like-minded organizations.

Partner with other organizations to share information.

Work on common issues with affiliated industry groups.

NRPA Supply Chain

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recently partnered with MultiView, Inc., an Irving, Texas-based publisher of electronic buyer's guides and search engines, to launch the *NRPA Supply Chain*.

Supply Chain is a service targeted to NRPA's 20,000 members representing the park and recreation industry. This business tool will be available from a link on the [NRPA homepage](#) and www.nrpaupplychain.com to anyone interested in industry products and services.

Supply Chain is a unique online resource that enables park and recreation professionals to search industry-wide for the products and services they need.

Starting March 30th, representatives from MultiView will begin calling industry suppliers to our community to discuss *Supply Chain*. We are asking that you please take a few minutes to speak with the representative and answer any questions to help MultiView understand your needs. Your feedback and participation will help ensure that *Supply Chain* will be the most effective, complete resource to help meet the supply needs of the industry.

If you have any questions regarding *Supply Chain*, please contact the customer service staff at MultiView at 972.402.7070 or John Crosby, NRPA Director of Marketing and Communications at 703.858.2142.

photo by: PlayGuard Playground Safety Surfacing, IPEMA Certified



IPEMA MEMBER SURVEY

COMPLETE AND RETURN

Recently IPEMA was approached by Alexander & Hamilton, Inc. (A&H), a global debt recovery firm. This firm has proposed a partnership with IPEMA by listing us as a Preferred Clients Group and will offer IPEMA members discounted rates on all the services A&H offers, including commercial collections, business to business information services including credit, asset, and background investigations, receivables management, legal forwarding and due diligence services.

To gain perspective on whether this would be a beneficial decision for our membership, IPEMA is tracking member responses through a survey. Please take a few minutes to fill out this anonymous survey and return it to IPEMA via fax (717-238-9985) or via mail to IPEMA Survey, 4305 North Sixth Street, Suite A, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

1. Our gross annual sales are:
 - Over \$3 million
 - Less than \$3 million

2. Our company currently uses a debt recovery firm.
 - Yes
 - No

If so, what firm does your company use? _____

If our company were to use a debt recovery firm...

3. Would it be beneficial that they function globally?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Would it be beneficial if an audit approach method of collections was used to focus on rehabilitating your customer?
This method would be for those slow pay customers you wish to keep as customers.
 - Yes
 - No

5. Would it be beneficial to report debtor information to the Experian® National Commercial Credit Database? *There are two principal advantages to this tool. First, if debtors attempt to take out a loan from a bank that uses Experian credit services, they will be denied. Your delinquent debtors will have to return to Alexander and Hamilton to pay off their delinquent account. Second, the threat of placing a credit negative is an effective negotiating tool.*
 - Yes
 - No

6. Would it be beneficial to work with a company that has legal office that would review accounts to determine suit worthiness (only after the accounts have been through an exhaustive collections process)?
 - Yes
 - No

7. Please provide any other feedback regarding IPEMA offering a partnership with Alexander & Hamilton, Inc. as a membership benefit.

*Please return to: IPEMA Survey, 4305 North Sixth Street, Suite A, Harrisburg, PA 17110
or via fax to 717-238-9985.*

Great Ideas in Play- Center for Creative Play

Center for Creative Play® (CFCP) is a national leader in the design and development of fully inclusive, developmentally appropriate indoor playspaces. Through a national advisory practice, CFCP is on target to impact more than **one million children** this year by improving the diversity, value, and accessibility of play opportunities nationwide.

This effort includes a Children's Museum Initiative, extensive training for educators, students, therapists and parents, and the operation of a model play environment in



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. CFCP Environments are currently operating or in development in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and West Virginia. CFCP envisions the day when every child and their family will have access to all-inclusive play environments, and will fulfill its vision by meeting its mission of ensuring that people understand the importance of play for *all* children.

V i s i t
www.centerforcreativeplay.org
to learn more about this organization.

NRPA to Conduct Health & Livability Summit

A generous grant from the National Recreation Foundation is allowing National Recreation & Park Association to host the first ever National Health and Livability Summit in Atlanta, April 17-19, 2007.

With high-impact organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials involved, this event will examine the vital contributions that park and recreation agencies make to increase the quality of life, health and livability of the individuals and communities they serve. The key focus areas of the summit will include the science of obesity and its growing trend in the United States; physical activity and nutrition; public/private partnerships; health disparities/at-risk populations; the built environment; and safety and preparedness.

The first day of the summit, April 17th, will focus on the current state of public health science and draw the connection to leisure research. Participants will learn the latest health statistics and public health research to lay the foundation of the direction of parks and recreation. On April 18th, the second day, attendees will receive a snapshot of some of the best practices currently being used by public health and park and recreation agencies throughout the nation. The final day of the Summit provides attendees

with the necessary tools they need to implement the science-based best practices they learned at the Summit. NRPA works with a variety of advocacy partners to implement our policy recommendations for health and livability. Thursday's sessions focus on the specific areas of NRPA's Call to Action: physical activity promotion; proper nutrition advocacy; safety and injury prevention strategies; disaster preparedness; and contributions to the built environment.

Registration for this event is available online, as well as more information surrounding NRPA's health initiatives. To learn more about NRPA and the National Health and Livability Summit, please visit nrpa.org.



**National Recreation
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www.nrpa.org

News from NPCAI...



The International Playgrounds Contractors Association NPCAI, A Service Organization

The NPCAI is a non-profit trade association that has been providing numerous services to playground builders, owners and the playground industry for ten years; profiled here are some of those services.

THE NPCAI INSURANCE PROGRAM

The NPCAI has an in-house insurance program that only NPCAI members can access. The program is operated by City Securities, an insurance firm out of Indianapolis, Indiana. The program offers a wide variety of products from liability and workers compensation insurance, to errors and omissions. Manufacturers, sales representatives, member associates and playground contractors are benefiting from combined records of experience which allows underwriters to get a clear picture of the work performed and the risk factors involved.

To date, the NPCAI Member Insurance Program has written nearly 1 million dollars in premiums and saved members thousands of dollars in premiums. An application can be downloaded at the www.playground-contractors.org, or by calling Steve Carraway at 317-634-4400.

THE PLAYGROUND CONSTRUCTION SCHOOL

The NPCAI Playground Construction School is the only source of continuing education about the business of building playgrounds. This three day assigned NPCAI committee, provides to veteran contractors. Every person construction of playgrounds in any way NPCAI Playground Construction



Participants come away with an the competence and reducing potential analysis, pre-construction issues, jobsite with general contractors, installation insurance, and the value of play, are analyzed in the class. The next session will be held in Denver Colorado, October 18 – 20th. To register, visit www.playground-contractors.org or call 1-888-908-9519.

course, developed by a specially in-depth training for rookie installers that finds themselves involved in the will benefit from participation at the School.

increased awareness about increasing liability of an installation team. Site safety, reading blueprints, working techniques, tools of the trade, some of the topics discussed and

THE NPCAI QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS PROGRAM

The NPCAI Qualified Contractors Program was created as a way for professional playground contractors to distinguish themselves as licensed, certified, and insured, to specifically build playgrounds. NPCAI Qualified Contractors set themselves apart from other installers that do not understand the importance or don't want to spend the time, effort, and money to educate their employees, obey local and state licensing laws, and may conduct business without insurance.

Qualified contractor credentials are all the assurance a playground purchaser/owner needs in order to make an educated decision about whom to hire to build their equipment. To view the entire qualified contractors listing visit the NPCAI website at www.playground-contractors.org.



Upcoming Events

April 17-19, 2007

**NRPA National Health & Livability Summit
OMNI CNN Center, Atlanta, Georgia**

The National Recreation & Park Association would like to announce it's first-ever National Health and Livability Summit, which will take place on April 17 – 19, 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Summit will bring together not only park and recreation experts, but experts from the public health arena, national health organizations (such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), and much more. This event will examine the vital contributions that park and recreation agencies make to increase the quality of life, health, and livability of the individuals and communities they serve.

www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=4704

April 17-20, 2007

**Washington Recreation and Park Association
Conference**

Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine, Washington

For more info call: 360-459-9396 or e-mail:
britk@wrpatoday.org

April 22-25, 2007

**New York Recreation and Park Society Conference
Adam's Mark Hotel Buffalo, New York**

The NYSRPS Annual Conference and Business Expo is the Society's premier event, bringing together recreation professionals from throughout New York State and the northeast for four days of educational sessions, off-site institutes, networking, entertainment and product information.

For more info call Gia Lemerise @ 518-584-0321 or e-mail: lernerise_nysrps@verizon.net

April 24-26, 2007

**Ohio NPSI Course
Columbus, Ohio**

Call 614-430-8590 to register. Be sure to visit www.nrpa.org/npsi_course often for updates, links to the host groups, additional details.

April 25-28, 2007

**American Association for the Child's Right to Play
(IPA/USA-Canada) International Play Conference**

The theme of the 2007 conference is "Play Matters."
www.ipausa.org/ipatasconference.htm

May 1-2, 2007

**Illinois Assoc. of Park Districts Legislative
Conference
Springfield, Illinois**

Visit www.ilparks.org/secure/legislative_conference_2007.asp for more information.

May 3-5, 2007

**New Jersey NPSI Course
Middletown, New Jersey**

Please call 732-568-1270 for more information or to register. Be sure to visit www.nrpa.org/npsi_course often for updates, links to the host groups, additional details.

May 20-24, 2007

**ASTM F-15 Playground Sub-Committees Meeting
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside; Norfolk, VA**

www.astm.org

May 22, 2007, 8:00 am- 12:00 pm

**IPEMA Board of Directors Meeting
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside; Norfolk, VA**

May 22, 2007, 7:00-9:00 pm

**IPEMA Membership Meeting
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside; Norfolk, VA**

May 23, 2007, 6:30-9:00 pm

**IPEMA Surfacing Committee Meeting
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside; Norfolk, VA**

September 25-29, 2007

**NRPA 2007 NRPA Congress & Exposition
Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana**

Have industry news that you think should be shared with the membership?

Pass it along!

Send news for inclusion in the next e-newsletter to
communications@ipema.org

In the News...

Scandinavian Expansion for PLAYTOP

The international expansion of play surfacing provider, Playtop Limited, has stepped up a gear with the opening of a Playtop office in Odense, Denmark and the appointment of Thomas Moller-Nielsen as its International Business Development Manager for Scandinavia. From its base in Newark, Nottinghamshire, Playtop has established a worldwide network of licensees for its impact-absorbing play surfacing. The result has been an increase in export sales of over 150% during the past three years and in 2006 the company was awarded a Queen's Award for International Trade. Nigel Allen, Playtop's managing director said: "Whilst we now have licensees in over 25 countries, Denmark will be our first office outside the UK. We see enormous potential in Scandinavia and are delighted to have Thomas on board." Thomas can be reached by emailing thomas.moller@playtop.com or calling 01636 615868.

Source: PLAYTOP news release (January 2007)

No child left out of a dodgeball game?

"The 2006 Shape of the Nation — jointly conducted by the American Heart Association and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting high quality physical education — concluded that most states are failing to provide students with adequate physical education requirements. The percentage of students who attend a daily physical education class has dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 28 percent in 2003, the report says. The report's findings are compelling in the context of the rise in obesity rates. The number of kids considered overweight has more than tripled since 1980, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Among those between ages 6 to 19, over 9 million kids — 16 percent — are considered overweight... Meanwhile, some 41 million American kids participate in organized, extracurricular youth sports like soccer, baseball, and football, which can balance the reported drop in physical activity at school. But, proponents of increased physical activity contend that not every child is able to take part in the sometimes-expensive organized play, making physical education in schools essential."

Source: CNN.com (August 06), Helyn Trickey

Full Story: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/08/20/PE.NCLB/index.html>

Bear Stearns Merchant Banking Announces Acquisition of PlayCore Holdings

Bear Stearns Merchant Banking ("BSMB"), a leading private equity firm focusing on middle-market investments, today announced that, together with company management, it has acquired PlayCore Holdings, Inc. ("PlayCore") from an investor group led by Chartwell Investments. Playcore is a leading designer, manufacturer and marketer of a broad range of playground equipment, accessories and related play products. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed... Based in Chattanooga, Tennessee, PlayCore specializes in the design, manufacture and marketing of commercial and consumer playground equipment. The commercial business operates under the *GameTime* and *Play and Park Structures* brands and markets custom designed playground equipment and accessories primarily to municipalities, schools and parks. PlayCore's consumer brand, *Swing-N-Slide*, is an award-winning manufacturer of play system kits for backyard use.

Source: Melissa Daly or Elisa Marks, Brunswick Group (212) 333-3810

Honoring Dr. Fran Wallach

"The playground safety movement in the United States, the National Playground Safety Institute has bestowed its highest award, the Distinguished Fellow Award, to Frances Wallach, Ed.D., president of Total Recreation Management Services of New York, NY. She along with Ken Kutska of Illinois and Monty Christianson of Pennsylvania, founded the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI) in 1989."

Source: *Today's Playground* (March/April 07)

Garick Acquires Tarhell Bark of North Carolina

"Garick acquired Tarheel Bark from Baucom's Nursery Co... Today, Tarhell produces growing media, mulches, soils, and organic materials to hundreds of customers in North Carolina, South Carolina, and other areas in the Southeast, United States. Garick will continue selling to Tarheel's current customer base as well as continue to provide Baucom's Nursery with its specific custom mixes... The acquisition of Tarhell Bark is the second acquisition for Garick in the past four months. In December 2006, Garick finalized the acquisition of New Milford Farms in New Milford, Connecticut... In January 2007, Hendricks Holding Company, Inc. acquired Garick."

Source: Garick News release (29 March 07)

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