



PRESS RELEASE

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KHCPL WINS PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Imagination Playground LLC announced today that the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library is the latest recipient of a 105-piece Big Blue Blocks set complete with Play Associate training, valued at \$7,500. It's the first time a library has ever won.

"When we got the call that we'd won, our staff was literally squealing, shouting for joy, dancing, and jumping up and down — not everyday occurrences in a library," said Lisa Fipps, Director of Marketing and Community Engagement at KHCPL. "They said we won by several hundred votes. It wasn't a narrow margin. We were the clear winner."

Imagination Playground's Vote for Play program allows communities to vote for their favorite school, family center — or in Kokomo's case, a library — to bring an Imagination Playground Big Blue Blocks set to the children they serve. Voting sessions run multiple times throughout the year. KHCPL is the third organization to receive the award in 2016.

Imagination Playground's Big Blue Blocks set contains a wide variety of loose parts, including cubes, bricks, cogs, curves, and cylinders. They have holes and shapes that fit together in ways that allow for building, stacking, channeling, and connecting. These shapes prompt children to consider balance, asymmetry, positive and negative space, and to think ahead as they build. They combine all the benefits of block play on a larger-than-life-size scale that encourages kids to play together in groups and have more fun. Children enjoy an endless variety of play patterns including construction, pretend play, role-playing, and inventing their own games.

“When we saw the contest, we immediately entered,” Fipps said. “We love that it has loose parts that encourage children to create a play space of their own. It dovetails perfectly with Science Technology Engineering and Math learning. In today’s global world, it’s crucial that children excel in STEM. The Imagination Playground 105-piece Big Block Set will be used during our upcoming three-month engineering exhibit.”

KHCPL was one of only eight libraries in the nation to receive the Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference exhibit. It’ll be from February 25 to May 19 at KHCPL South.

“With the block set, we can let the kids do some engineering of their own.” Fipps said. “Before and after Discover Tech, we will be able to share the blocks among our three locations.”

The more KHCPL learned about Imagination Playground, the more it wanted to win.

“As a town with a lot of union workers, we were thrilled to find out that the product is made in the USA,” Fipps said. “Since we recycle and just finished a yearlong project to educate the community about the importance of saving pollinators (Grow the Solution Together), we care about the environment, so it’s was a big plus for us to see that the product is biodegradable and recyclable once it has served our patrons for many years.”

David Krishock, President and CEO of Imagination Playground, offered his congratulations to KHCPL, saying, “It thrills us beyond words that we could help children from eight different townships in Indiana get free access to creative play through their local library.”

“The greatest thing about the Imagination Playground is that the community benefits,” Fipps said. “We are truly grateful to our patrons and the citizens of Kokomo and Howard County who voted for us. We also thank all of our staff members for voting and spreading the word. KHCPL didn’t win this; everyone did!”

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