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Burke options ease challenge of funding playgrounds

Getting funding for a new playground or playground expansion can sometimes be daunting. But BCI Burke provides ways to make it a lot easier. Here are a few programs that customers are finding invaluable as they seek to obtain funding for playgrounds in a tough economy.

Burke's Economic Stimulus Package

In the spirit of doing our part to stimulate the economy, we've decided to provide \$1 million in grants to help schools, day care centers, parks and recreation departments, and other agencies fund playgrounds and playground expansion. Applications will be accepted until April 23, but you may want to get your application in sooner to ensure availability of funds. All grants will be awarded by April 30th. Click [here](#) for more information on Burke's economic stimulus package.

Funds for Fun®

Many organizations find that a fund-raiser for a new playground can pull together their community, but communicating the need in a way that gets results can be a challenge. This online toolkit allows you to customize documents to give parents and donors an overview of the project and keep them informed on the progress. The tool kit also has documents to help you plan, organize and follow-up on fundraising tasks. Some items include letters, brochures, progress poster, newsletters and thank-you cards. Click [here](#) for more information on Funds for Fun.



Grant Resource Center

If you're looking for playground grants but don't know where to start, then check out our online Grant Resource Center that allows you search for grants for new playgrounds. We've partnered with The School Funding Center to provide expert grant writing services to you for a modest fee. Their network of experienced grant writers can help get you some of the money you need. Click [here](#) for more information on the Grant Resource Center.



Lease-to-Own Program

If you're ready to purchase a playground but are a little short on capital, then we have an option for you! Our lease-to-own program can get the funds to you quickly. We've partnered with Marlin Leasing to provide a leasing option for playgrounds. Applications are approved within two hours, and funds are available within 24 hours. Click [here](#) for more information on the lease-to-own program.

However we do it, we must get kids moving

By Tim Ahern

An associate who visited a zoo recently commented that it brought back memories of the old ads -- usually featured in comic books -- touting a bodybuilding program developed by Charles Atlas, once named the "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

Atlas, whose real name was Angelo Siciliano, claimed to have developed the program after

watching a tiger stretching in the zoo and asking himself how animals keep fit without barbells and such. The result was a fitness regimen that focused on isotonic exercises, which pit one muscle against others to build strength.

I wouldn't presume to evaluate the merits of Atlas's fitness program, but the whole idea of keeping fitness simple appeals to me. Like a lot of other people these days, I work out in a fitness center that has all sorts of equipment from simple dumbbells to highly sophisticated machines for building strength and cardiovascular health.

Deep down, I know that the humble pushup is widely regarded as the single most effective exercise for total fitness. Indeed, the Marines have long built their conditioning program around it. But I hate pushups! In fact, I hardly know anybody who enjoys calisthenics. And the best exercise in the world won't help people who won't do it.

That's one reason we developed our fitness-oriented Intensity® fitness play complex. With childhood obesity, Type 2 diabetes and related conditions at epidemic levels in our society, it's important for all of us to do what we can to get kids moving, stretching and exerting themselves.

So rather than nagging kids to start doing pushups, we put our engineers to work designing equipment that's both fun and challenging. More often than not, kids don't even know they're getting a workout, and that's fine by me. But for schools that want to take the fitness benefits to the next level, we developed our Intensity Curriculum to guide teachers and playground supervisors in organizing games and other fun competitions.

It's all about the movement and exertion. There are countless ways of promoting fitness in kids, and I'm in favor of anything that promotes that goal safely and effectively.

Even if it's based on a tiger's fitness habits. After all, I've never seen a fat tiger!

Playing for your heart

Getting kids active and making exercise fun helps to establish healthy lifestyle habits that can last into adulthood. As the nation observes American Heart Month during February, now's the perfect time to check out how BCI Burke's fitness-oriented Intensity® playgrounds get kids' hearts pumping.

A sedentary lifestyle is one of the top risk factors for heart disease, so our Intensity fitness play complex is designed to spur them into action. Intensity ensures that children get strength and aerobic exercise through spinning, climbing and jumping -- which have many benefits for hearts, including strengthening the heart and lungs as well as improving the body's ability to use oxygen.

Kids get aerobic exercise through running around and playing on devices such as Intensity's Hop Spots. These stool-like discs encourage jumping. Some discs are stable while others have springs to give kids a small boost.

Although running and jumping quickly boost heart rates, Intensity's strengthening activities also work the heart. Just hop on the Kidforce Spinner or Extreme Cyclone, and you'll see how quickly even the simplest motions help to boost your circulation. These two activities strengthen the core muscles that stabilize the spine and run the entire length of the torso. And it's easy to control the spin just by rocking back and forth.

Along with every Intensity playground comes the Intensity Curriculum that's geared to allow kids to get the most benefits out of Intensity playgrounds. The curriculum, that's for teachers and playground supervisors, has a list of every Intensity event, organized games for each event with various difficulty levels, and a list of muscles worked at the event. It's an easy tool to help your kids learn how to enjoy exercise.

For more information about Intensity or the Intensity Curriculum please visit www.getintensity.com and www.getintensity.com/curriculum.



Confidence is key in building trust

Janet Wachs knows how stressful planning a playground can be. As the Direct Sales Representative for BCI Burke, she's helped many people plan the details that go along with playgrounds and says that confidence is key when talking with customers.

"People look through so many options that information sometimes starts to blur, so I make it a point to speak confidently and assure them that we will get through the process together," said Wachs.

After she builds the trust, she continues to offer superior service.

"At Burke, we want people to be taken care of no matter where they live, so I work with customers who don't have a representative selling exclusively in their area. I listen to what they want and help guide them. From funding and product selection to color coordination and installation, I make sure everything goes as smoothly as possible," she said.

And like all Burke representatives, Wachs confidence comes from knowing that her customers can count on Burke when there's an issue.

"Customer service doesn't end when your playground is installed. It continues long after. If there is something wrong with the playground, we'll work quickly to make things right. We don't sit back thinking about the problem, we go out and fix it. And with our non-prorated warranties, customers can rest assured they will be taken care of in the future," she said.

Though Burke service is legendary, Wachs says that it's the way Burke has evolved that continues to keep the company competitive in the industry.

"Burke embraces change. They are open to feedback and work to meet customer needs. They aren't just changing for the sake of change, but rather developing and growing to better accommodate their customers," she said.

Technology, she says, is one change that has helped them reach out to customers.

"Burke has utilized technology to make information available online. Now customers can click to find out information about grants, fundraising, color options as well as how to find a rep right from the Burke web site. They can access the information day or night and it makes planning a playground a little easier," she said.

Interested in joining the BCI Burke team?

We're looking for reps both in the United States and abroad. Visit www.burkecareers.com for details.

