

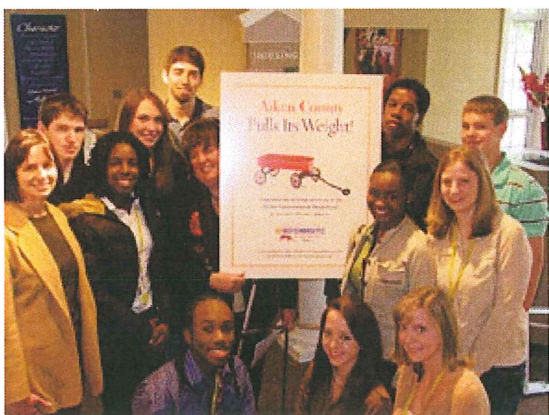
America's Promise Alliance Announces the 2008 100 Best Communities for Young People

Competition Identifies Best Places in America for Young People to Live and Grow Up

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The America's Promise Alliance (the Alliance) and Capital One today announced the winners of the *2008 100 Best Communities for Young People (100 Best)* competition which identifies cities and towns nationwide that have made the well-being of children and youth a top priority. In its third year, *100 Best* spotlights those communities that find unique and effective ways to ensure their young people receive the resources necessary to stay in school and succeed.

Nearly 750 participants from more than 300 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico entered this year's competition. The winning communities for 2008 include cities, towns and counties of all sizes and regions from 37 states. Of that list, 44 communities were three time winners, a first in *100 Best* history.

This year's competition was the most competitive to date, with hundreds of communities submitting applications detailing a variety of innovative and effective programs. Due to a score tie between two strong communities, the Alliance selected to honor 101 communities.



"The *100 Best* competition is more important than ever because it's become harder for cities and towns to focus on the needs of their children with all the challenges facing them and we see the impact of

this in our dismal high school graduation rates," said Marguerite Kondracke, president and CEO, America's Promise Alliance. "These communities rose above and through their actions, remind us that there are cities and towns that are going the extra mile everyday to make sure young people reach their potential. On behalf of the Alliance, I congratulate these communities and call on others to follow their lead."

"Capital One has been proud to partner with the Alliance over the past three years on this competition because we share America's Promise's vision that children are successful when they are part of vibrant, high-functioning communities," said Carolyn Berkowitz, Vice President of Community Affairs for Capital One and member of the *100 Best* selection panel. "Which is why, as a company, we are committed to building stronger communities, one neighborhood at a time. It is our hope that these *100 Best* inspire communities across the country to create environments where children and families have boundless opportunities."

All communities that took part in the 2008 competition completed an application based upon research from the National Academies of Science, Search Institute, Academy for Educational Development and Child Trends. This included submitting information on how their existing programs and initiatives help deliver the Five Promises—resources identified by the Alliance as being critical to the development of healthy, successful children: caring adults; safe places; healthy start; effective education; and opportunities to help others. Applicants were also asked to describe how different sectors of their community work together to help children and families overcome challenges and specific efforts and programs developed to ensure that their young people graduate from high school prepared for college and/or the workforce.

The 2008 winners were chosen by a distinguished panel of judges that included some of the nation's most well-known civic, business and nonprofit leaders such as: Gayle Manchin, first lady of West Virginia, United Way President Brian Gallagher, former Mayor of Denver and President of Webb Group International, Wellington Webb, Thomas Donohue, president and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Carol Coletta, president and CEO, CEOs for Cities, Christine James-Brown, president and CEO, the Child Welfare League of America, and Dr. Suzanne Morse, executive director of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

Winners and participants in the 2008 competition are also eligible for additional rewards. Every community that completed an application this year, regardless of whether they were named a winner, will be eligible to apply for \$300,000 in grants from the Alliance beginning next month. In addition, the Alliance has teamed up with KABOOM! to give a brand new community-built playground—valued at \$70,000—to one of the 2008 *100 Best* winners. To qualify for the new playground, communities must be named a 2008 *100 Best* and a 2008 Playful City USA as part of the KABOOM! National Campaign for Play. The winner of the playground will be announced later in the year.

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About the America's Promise Alliance

America's Promise Alliance is the nation's leader in forging a strong and effective partnership alliance comprised of corporations, nonprofit organizations, foundations, policymakers, advocacy and faith groups committed to ensuring that children receive the fundamental resources - the Five Promises - they need to lead successful, healthy and productive lives and build a stronger society. Building on the legacy of our founder General Colin Powell, the Alliance believes the success of our children is grounded in experiencing the Five Promises - caring adults; safe place; a healthy start; an effective education; and opportunities to help others - at home, in school and in the community.