

For immediate release: Wednesday 29 October 2014

White City crowned London Adventure Playground of the Year



White City Adventure Playground returned triumphantly to west London yesterday newly crowned 'London Adventure Playground of the Year 2014'. Its success was particularly significant given the plight of two neighbouring adventure playgrounds, Stonebridge and Sands End, now fighting tooth and nail for survival. Playgrounds in Islington, Lambeth and Hackney also saw wins in the London Play awards - while a street in Haringey was named first ever London Play Street of the Year and an Enfield primary cleaned up in the schools category.

Around 150 children from playgrounds, schools, and play streets across London descended on the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley yesterday to see films they had entered into the awards about the places, up in lights and on the big screen. The question on everyone's lips: who would win the coveted main prize?

Set to Pharrell William's 'Happy', the White City film was shot partially from an improvised tyre-seat on wheels and showed children building stuff from recycled materials, destroying, swinging, climbing, cooking over fire, playing with water, dressing up, getting dirty, painting and generally being free to choose how they play.

Children from the 2013 winning playground at Shakespeare Walk in Hackney handed over the top prize to an excited White City group. "It's an amazing place," said Elnaz, 8. "I'm so happy because I didn't think we were going to win! It's fabulous." Elias, 10 added: "I like going there because you get to build anything you want out of wood."

White City is one of the newer adventure playgrounds in London, having evolved over recent years from a more standard childcare facility to the fully-fledged, award-winning adventure playground that it is today. The winning prize will enhance the playground further with a new structure, designed and built by APEs Adventure Playground Engineers with the help of the children, and £500 worth of free materials.

But with eight award categories for schools and play streets as well as adventure playgrounds, there was plenty more excitement on offer. Along with the films came plenty of popcorn, noise, games and high jinks with compere Charlie Kemp keeping the atmosphere just on the right side of chaos and ensuring that no one went away disappointed.

Islington's Lumpy Hill Adventure Playground was named 'Coolest Place to Play'; Lollard Street in Lambeth won the category for 'Inventiveness'; the KIDS playground in Hackney for disabled children came top for 'Variety' and Houndsfield Primary in Enfield wrested the 'Best Adventure Play in a School' award off the reigning two-time champion Carterhatch Infants. Reflecting the inexorable rise of play streets in the capital, the inaugural Play Street of the Year title was taken by a jubilant group from Redston Road in Haringey.

"As we see yet more adventure playgrounds in London come under threat, this annual event has taken on even greater significance – acknowledging and celebrating the life-affirming and even life-transforming role that these places play in the lives of children and young people," said London Play chair Melian Mansfield. "Only last month heavyweight boxing champion Audley Harrison credited Harlesden's Stonebridge Adventure Playground, now threatened with demolition, as the place that he learned 'respect and key life skills'.

With a quarter of London's children living in overcrowded homes and one in five are overweight or obese, space and opportunity to play is vital. Playgrounds like White City are doing a fantastic job with few resources – we hope that these awards make more people understand how valuable these places are and act to protect them.”

John O'Driscoll, director of main award sponsors APES said: “The London Adventure Play Awards offer vital recognition of the difference play makes in the capital, and it's a privilege to be associated with them.”

Films of the event will be uploaded shortly: <http://www.youtube.com/londonplaychannel>

Notes to the editor

1. London Play promotes children's right to play, campaigns for more and improved out-of-school play services for children and young people across London, and supports play work in the capital. Reg. charity no.1104731, company no. 4055882
2. There are around 90 adventure playgrounds across London providing school-aged children with opportunities to play that are difficult to find elsewhere in our busy, urban environment. Fenced and secure, adventure playgrounds are oases of nature, often located in some of London's more deprived neighbourhoods. Now in their 14th year, the London Adventure Play Awards serve to celebrate and promote the unique and valuable role that these places play in the lives of London's children.
3. Full list of winners for 2014:

Adventure Playground of the Year (sponsored by APES)

White City Adventure Playground

The winning prize is a new playground structure, designed and built by APES Adventure Playground Engineers with the help of the children, and £500 worth of free materials.

Coollest Place to Play Award (Sponsored by the [Worshipful Company of Fan Makers](#))

Winner: Lumpy Hill Adventure Playground, Islington (wins £500 to improve the playground)

Highly commended: Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground, Hackney

Inventiveness Award

Winner: Lollard Street Adventure Playground, Lambeth

Highly commended: ELHAP, Redbridge

Variety Award

Winner: KIDS Adventure Playground, Hackney

Highly commended: Acacia Adventure Playground, Merton

Most Adventurous Play Offer in a School (Sponsored by [Argos](#))

Winner: Houndsfield Primary School, Enfield (Wins £500 worth of outdoor play equipment)

Highly commended: Carterhatch Infant School, Enfield

The Janet Dalglish Play Street of the Year Award

Redston Road, Haringey (Wins £500 for an on-street celebration)
Highly commended: Rommany Road, Lambeth

Best Film

Winner: Florence Hayes Adventure Playground, Enfield

Highly commended: Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground, Hackney

4. Stonebridge Adventure Playground in Brent is currently threatened with demolition and Sands End Adventure Playground in Hammersmith has had its funding cut by the council. Both have launched campaigns – see more at www.londonplay.org.uk
5. The awards are sponsored by APES Adventure Playground Engineers, Argos and the Worshipful Company of Fanmakers, whose generous contributions have allowed us to offer winners in three categories some great prizes. Thanks also to the Janet Dalglish legacy and Reaching Communities funding for supporting the play street award.
6. Adventure Playground Engineers (APES) are award-winning London-based playground engineers with 15 years' experience of developing adventure playgrounds, designing and building play structures in public parks, schools, urban environments, community gardens and tourist spots.
7. Argos is sponsoring the school award to promote excellence in play provision in schools and will offer the winner a choice of outdoor toys including a trampoline, playhouse or climbing frame up to a value of £500. www.argos.co.uk
8. Charlie Kemp is a performer and director with the acclaimed Chickenshed Theatre company in north London. As well as appearing in many recent productions Charlie is the artistic director of 'Tales From The Shed', the company's ever-evolving under-fives spectacle.

For media enquiries and more high resolution pictures of the event please contact: -

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