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A photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors in a vineyard. The man, on the left, has long brown hair and a light beard, wearing a light blue polo shirt. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored tank top. They are both smiling warmly at the camera. The background is filled with green grapevines under bright, natural light.

Making Good for Carter's Kids

By Kay Harris-Ross

Photos Courtesy Carter Oosterhouse and Carter's Kids

Carter Oosterhouse is married to actress Amy Smart, who is also active in the organization.



Founded by Carter Oosterhouse, known from popular series such as FYI Network's *Rowhouse Showdown*, HGTV's *Carter Can*, *Red Hot & Green*, *Celebrity Motor Homes*, and more, Carter's Kids is a non-profit organization dedicated to partnering within communities to enable children to improve their social, physical and cognitive development through play. In addition to creating awareness about fitness and self-esteem for our youth, the foundation is also committed to combating the issue of childhood obesity, which has more than tripled in the past 30 years.

The percentage of children in the United States aged 6–11 years who are considered to be obese has increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 20% by 2008. Similarly, the percentage of obese adolescents aged 12–19 years has increased from 5% to 18% over the same period of time. And, high blood pressure, diabetes, as well as heart and kidney disease are occurring more often for children and at a younger age.

Obesity also carries over into adulthood with a current rate of 34.5% in the United States, or one in every three adults. This increased amount of adult obesity has also led to higher

rates of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and even cancer. So the issue is clearly a serious one and is at epidemic proportions.

Knowing that children need a minimum of 60 minutes of active play daily (in addition to balanced food consumption), Carter's Kids has made it their mission to increase the activity level in children by developing and building community parks and playgrounds in their neighborhoods. This goal has led to building various projects in communities all over the United States and has given kids the opportunity to take an active part in building up their community by using, sharing, and caring for these well-purposed public spaces. Having these parks in the community also helps to fight gang violence and gives kids a safe place to play.

"These playgrounds demonstrate a community's core values and create healthier places to live, work and play," states founder of the namesake charity, Carter Oosterhouse. "It's an incredible thing to be a part of and knowing that they will have a long lasting effect on the community is something we're really proud of."

This celebrity-backed foundation works closely with neighborhood children to ensure that they are

involved participants in the building process from beginning to end. This collaborative effort insures that they will be active and creates a connection with the kids and their space so that they gain the sense of ownership and pride for something that they helped build.

"There is no greater sense of satisfaction than when you see something that you've built being enjoyed by others."

Working hard to promote active lifestyles for our kids, Carter's Kids is seeking corporate sponsorships to help fulfill their mission. To find out how you can help support their efforts or even get involved at a local level, please visit Carters-Kids.org.



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