

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM ADDS WEEKEND ‘CENTENNIAL TOURS’ OF MEMORIAL HALL Weekend tours added as new crop of guides complete training in National Historic Landmark

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Please Touch Museum, the Children’s Museum of Philadelphia, is now offering weekend guided tours of Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park. Visitors interested in learning more about the history of the National Historic Landmark and its role in the 1876 Centennial Exposition may take guided tours on Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Admission is \$15. Weekday tours remain available on Thursdays at 2 p.m.

The tours are a stroll down memory lane and a walk through the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, the World’s Fair for which Memorial Hall was built. Prior to adding the weekend days, the museum trained a batch of new tour guides, who recently completed a three-month course on the history of the museum led by Stacey Swigart, the museum’s Curator of Collections, and Theater Experience Manager David Hutchman. The knowledgeable guides provide visitors with a fun, in-depth walk through the restored landmark building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and has served multiple purposes as a museum, a recreation center, a special event space and even a recording studio in its 134 years.

“Centennial Tours for our grown-up visitors have continued to become more popular since we launched the program last year, and we are responding to the many requests for more dates to be added,” said Laura Foster, President & CEO of Please Touch Museum. “We are very excited to introduce our new tour guides, each of whom brings an enthusiasm for history combined with a playful approach that is pure Please Touch Museum.”

While the 1876 Centennial is a major focus of the tours, there are many fun facts from Memorial Hall’s 20th century history as a multi-use recreation center that are part of the tours. Where was the indoor, Olympic-sized swimming pool? Did Memorial Hall *really* have four jail cells? Where was the basketball court, and when did the Philadelphia Orchestra use it as a recording studio? Grown-ups can also enjoy the museum’s art collection, including two indoor murals created by Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Program and a 40-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty’s Arm and Torch created out of toys, games and other ‘found objects,’ gathered and assembled by Philadelphia artist Leo Sewell. The museum’s collection of more than 25,000 objects in the six exhibit zones from 1945 to the present is prominently displayed throughout the museum, prompting many “Wow, I had one of those when I was a kid!” moments from grown-up visitors.

Take a spin on the fully restored *Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel*, which originally operated at a Philadelphia amusement park less than 10 blocks from Memorial Hall. The animal menagerie, which dates back to 1908, is illuminated by 1,296 light bulbs and surrounded by an exhibit on the history of Woodside Park, which closed in 1955.

Self-guided Centennial Tours are available seven days a week for \$12 per person. Guided tours are available on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tours may also be reserved at a cost of \$15 per person, with discounts available for groups, by calling the museum at 215-581-3168 or 215-581-3170. Dining options are available in the museum’s Please Taste Cafe.

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Please Touch Museum® at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park is dedicated to enriching the lives of children by providing learning opportunities through play. Recognized locally and nationally as one of the best children’s museums, Please Touch is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults and children age one and over. Children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-581-3181, or visit our web site at www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.