

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **ENCHANTED COLONIAL VILLAGE BOLSTERED BY \$50,000 GRANT FROM THE PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION**

**Scenes from the Enchanted Colonial Village on display November 12, 2010–January 2, 2011**

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** – Please Touch Museum kicks off the holiday season with an annual trip back in time to the Village—the Enchanted Colonial Village! Since 2001, Please Touch has invited families to relive holidays past and make new memories as they visit this classic Philadelphia attraction. The annual display of the Village, where visitors can see the Bakery, Blacksmith Shop, Toymaker, Tailor Shop, Wigmaker, Schoolhouse and Village Store, was recently bolstered by a \$50,000 grant from the Philadelphia Foundation.

The grant will help the museum maintain, enhance and interpret the Enchanted Colonial Village, which premiered as a display in Philadelphia's Lit Brothers department store in 1962. The childhood treasure was donated to the museum in 2000 and restored back to its original state thanks to an initial grant from the Philadelphia Foundation.

"We are very grateful for this wonderful contribution and look forward to displaying the Enchanted Colonial Village for years to come. Preserving this Philadelphia icon is very important to us, not only because it is a part of our museum's history but because it is so embedded in the history of Philadelphia," said Please Touch Museum's President and CEO Laura Foster. "Please Touch Museum thanks the Philadelphia Foundation for their dedication in allowing us to continue to display one of the defining pieces in our Philadelphia Childhood Treasures collection."

Each year, parents visit Please Touch with fond memories of seeing the Enchanted Village as a child, and now bring their own children to discover its magic for the first time. Ten million Philadelphians and out-of-town guests visited the display of 18 original Enchanted Colonial Village scenes—then called "Enchanted Christmas Village"— at the Lit Brothers department store at 8th and Market Streets from 1962 until 1975.

After Lit Brothers filed for bankruptcy protection in 1977, the search for a new local display venue started. Determined to keep this local tradition a part of Philadelphia's holiday celebrations, the Sun Oil Company (Sunoco) purchased it during Lit's liquidation sale in hopes of keeping it in the city. The Village was displayed at locations like Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Horticulture, and the Atwater Kent Museum until Please Touch Museum took ownership of the nine remaining Village scenes in 2000. Since taking over ownership of this Philadelphia tradition, Please Touch Museum has made great efforts in restoring each figure and setting to their original beauty.

As in most neighborhoods this time of year, there's a lot going on in the Colonial Village. Families can take a peek into the busy Bakery where three bakers work feverishly filling the Village's orders for holiday breads. Their counters, rolling pins and hands are coated in flour as they mix, knead and shape loaves of bread.

The Blacksmith's environment is made up of tools, an anvil, glowing "fires" and leather and brass horses' tackle. Visitors will watch the Blacksmith teach his young apprentice the proper workshop skills and catch a glimpse of the Blacksmith's cat meowing and dog barking at each other from the rooftop, all taking place within a background of clanking metal sounds.

In the Village Store, there is plenty of shopping going on. You'll notice the shopkeeper helping a customer who is preoccupied with a hungry dachshund as it tries to chomp one of her purchases. Other patrons include a family with two small children and a little girl who is enjoying a bit of jam, right from the jar! Baskets of goods can be found on the counter and jars of everything you can imagine are stocked on the shelves.

Together, these scenes make for wonderful intergenerational learning and memory sharing. Parents with fond memories of seeing the Enchanted Village as a child can now bring their own children to discover its magic for the first time.

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Please Touch Museum will be **CLOSED** Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

The museum will close at 3 p.m. on Friday, December 24.

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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](http://www.pleasetouchmuseum.org).

**The Philadelphia Foundation**, a public charity, is Southeastern Pennsylvania's leading center for community philanthropic engagement and is committed to improving the quality of life in Bucks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties through funds established by its donors. Established in 1918, The Philadelphia Foundation continues to help donors harness their generosity and vision by providing tools, knowledge and financial stewardship directed to maximize the strategic impact of charitable contributions. Grants from more than 775 charitable funds strengthen the effectiveness of nonprofits and support programs that are vital to the people of this region. For more information please call, 215-563-6417 or visit [www.philafound.org](http://www.philafound.org).