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PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM AT MEMORIAL HALL RECEIVES AWARD FROM NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Nashville, Tenn. (October 15, 2009) – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** presented its **Preservation Honor Award** to **Please Touch Museum** for its restoration of **Memorial Hall in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park**. The project was one of 23 award winners honored by the National Trust during its 2009 National Preservation Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

A beloved Philadelphia landmark, Memorial Hall, the granite Beaux-Arts masterpiece in Fairmount Park, is one of just two remaining buildings constructed for the Centennial Exposition of 1876. With its prime perch above the Schuylkill River, Memorial Hall's soaring 150-foot iron-and-glass dome topped with a 23-foot-tall statue of Columbia provided a dramatic home for the Philadelphia Museum of Art for more than fifty years. Later used as a recreation center, police station and recording studio, Memorial Hall had been closed after years of severe deterioration, including a leaky roof, crumbling plaster and façade damage.

After decades on the sidelines, Memorial Hall is back in the spotlight as the new home of Please Touch Museum, the Children's Museum of Philadelphia, which opened in its new home in October 2008. Decades of deterioration have been swept away in an \$88 million restoration that brings the shine back to this National Historic Landmark. In the central rotunda, historic colors, ornate plasterwork and marble gleam again. Elsewhere, exhibits include displays recalling the glory days and long-term impact of the 1876 Exposition, and a glass-and-steel addition – the only major alteration to the historic building – houses the fully restored 1908 Dentzel Carousel from Woodside Park.

"More than a century ago, Memorial Hall was designed to be a world-class museum for the city of Philadelphia, and now after years of neglect, it again serves that purpose," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "Thanks to a visionary group of architects, museum officials and city leaders, Please Touch Museum will provide children with the opportunity to experience a great historic building, which is the first step in developing the next generation of historic preservationists."

Along with Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, project manager Northstar Advisors was honored as a co-recipient of the award along with project architect Kise, Straw and Kolodner, general contractors Daniel J. Keating Company, Bittenbender Construction, and McCrae Construction.

This national recognition is the latest in a series of awards and honors bestowed upon Please Touch Museum and its leaders in 2009. Among some of the regional awards the museum has received:

Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia 2009 Preservation Achievement Awards

- Public Service Award for Preservation in the Public Interest (Nancy Kolb)
- Preservation Achievement Grand Jury Award (Restoration of Memorial Hall)

Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations

- President's Award (Nancy Kolb)
- Award of Merit (Restoration of Memorial Hall)

Preservation Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award (Restoration of Memorial Hall)

The National Preservation Awards are bestowed on distinguished individuals, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and corporations whose skill and determination have given new meaning to their communities through preservation of our architectural and cultural heritage. These efforts include citizen attempts to save and maintain important landmarks; companies and craftsmen whose work restores the richness of the past; the vision of public officials who support preservation projects and legislation in their communities; and educators and journalists who help Americans understand the value of preservation. The winners of the National Preservation Awards will appear in the November/December issue of *Preservation Magazine* and online at www.PreservationNation.org/awards.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.

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.