

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Diane Kopasz
Association of Children's Museums
703-785-1845

Frank Luzi
Please Touch Museum
215-581-3171

CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS DECLARE FIELD'S IMPACT ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

— International Conference of Children's Museums Convened in Philadelphia —

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In less than four decades, the children's museum field has grown from 40 to 400 strong. The children's museum field experienced its first real surge during the recession of the 1970s, a time when new approaches to childhood education were gaining ground, changing families patterns were emerging and a belief that investing in children leads to stronger communities spread through grassroots efforts. Today, children's museums are widely acknowledged as favorite family destinations, trusted resources for child-centered play, learning and parenting advice, part of downtown revitalization projects and are critical partners for schools and social service organizations. Scheduled April 28-30 at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center, the Association of Children's Museums' (ACM) annual meeting — *InterActivity 2009: Declare Your Impact* — will explore the many ways the field impacts children, families and communities.

"From advocating a child's need to play, to providing educational experiences that engage all senses, to building social capital and to contributing economically to the well-being of communities, children's museums continue to make an indelible mark," says Janet Rice Elman, executive director of the Association of Children's Museums.

Hosted by Please Touch Museum, which reopened in October 2008 to spectacular reviews at the historic Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park, *InterActivity 2009* will draw more than 700 participants from the United States, Canada, Israel, Jordan, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.

InterActivity 2009 Schedule Highlights

Roxanne Spillett, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), will accept the 2009 *Great Friend to Kids Award* on behalf of her organization. Spillett, who was selected as one of the "Power 50" by *The Non-Profit Times* for three consecutive years, will speak about BGCA's recently launched Impact 2012 initiative. [Tues, April 28, 9:00 a.m.–10:15 a.m.]

Greg Mortenson, cofounder of *Central Asia Institute* and *Pennies for Peace*, and co-author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Three Cups of Tea*, will talk about his efforts to build schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan for young girls. [Tues, April 28, 1:15 p.m.–2:45 p.m.]

The ACM MarketPlace exhibit hall will feature a brilliant kaleidoscope of ideas from nearly 70 vendors that include architecture design firms, exhibit developers, children's museums, playground equipment manufacturers, landscape designers and arts and crafts suppliers. [Wed, April 29, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.]

Early childhood researchers and authors Cindy Dell Clark, PhD, Roberta Golinkoff, PhD, and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, PhD, will discuss in a salon the Impact of Play on Future Grownups. [Wed, April 29, 2:15 p.m.–3:30 p.m.]

Community Wealth Ventures representatives will lead a salon discussion on Management in a Challenging Economy. [Wed, April 29, 4:00 p.m.–5:15 p.m.]

Representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Annenberg School of Communication, Kennedy Krieger Institute and Sesame Workshop will debate media's impact in a Young Minds and Media Technologies salon. [Wed, April 29, 4:00 p.m.–5:15 p.m.]

Representatives from Economics Research Associates and Americans for the Arts will lead a salon session on Measuring Economic Impact. [Wed, April 29, 2:15 p.m.–3:30 p.m.]

Rebecca Flora, U.S. Green Building Council Senior VP for Education & Research, will address the environmental challenges that confront us and the crucial role that green building and green operations play in meeting these challenges. [Thurs, April 30, 9:00 a.m.–10:15 a.m.]

Members of the press can arrange onsite access for keynote or salon sessions by contacting ACM or Please Touch Museum.

InterActivity 2009: *Declare Your Impact* is supported by grants from William Penn Foundation, Target, The Lenfest Foundation and Philadelphia Historical & Museum Commission. Additional sponsor support is provided by Crayola, Lexington, NorthStar Advisors, Management Resources, Boss Display, Economics Research Associates, Superior Exhibits & Design, Inc., Jack Rouse Associates, Bittenbender Construction, Ironworkers' Local Union #401, Stradley Ronon, Sparks Exhibits & Environments,

K&K Insurance Group, RedBox Workshop, Explorer Systems, Inc., and MGA Partners Architects.

ACM and its partners will distribute a combined amount of \$60,000 to children's museums through the *MetLife Foundation and Association of Children's Museums Promising Practice Award Programs* and the *Universal Design for Learning Award Program*.

Supported by *VSA arts*, the *Universal Design for Learning Award* program identifies model children's museums that embrace people with disabilities by utilizing learning standards for inclusive practice. Awardees receive technical assistance to refine and document their practices for dissemination at other children's museums and a \$10,000 cash award. The three *Universal Design for Learning Awardees* will be announced during a breakfast ceremony in the Sheraton's Liberty Ballroom. [Thurs, April 30, 8:30 a.m.–8:45 a.m.]

Children's museums that clearly demonstrate how their programs, exhibits and/or management practices have impacted the health, diversity or play of children, families and/or communities through measurable evaluation will be recognized with a *MetLife Foundation and Association of Children's Museums Promising Practice Award*. Three cash awards totaling \$20,000 will be presented to selected museums. A *Replication Award* will be given to a museum previously honored through the *Promising Practice Award Program* (1999–2008). The *Replication Award* winner will use the \$10,000 cash award to create a tool kit to enable other museums to replicate its award-winning program. The four *Promising Practice Awardees* will be announced during the closing plenary session in the Sheraton's Liberty Ballroom. [Wed, April 30, 9:00 a.m.–10:15 a.m.]

About the InterActivity 2009 Hosts

Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park is the award-winning children's museum of Philadelphia, dedicated to enriching the lives of children by providing learning opportunities through play. Housed in a magnificently restored National Historic Landmark from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, Please Touch features six interactive exhibit zones: "Roadside Attractions," "Flight Fantasy," "City Capers," "Wonderland," "River Adventures," and "Centennial Exploration," along with daily activities and theater performances. Highlights include the century-old fully refurbished Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel and a 40-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty arm and torch, made entirely of toys. Please visit www.PleaseTouchMuseum.org for more information.

Association of Children's Museums

ACM is a professional service organization for children's museums around the world. ACM's mission is to build the capacity of children's museums to serve as town squares for children and families where play inspires creativity and lifelong learning. There are approximately 400 children's museums internationally. Children's museums annually reach more than 31 million children and families. For links to ACM's international list of museums and tips on making the most of the children's museum experience, visit www.ChildrensMuseums.org.

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