

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2009

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PLEASE TOUCH DEBUTS A BIG *BIG* MUSICAL GIFT

***Walking Piano* from the 1988 movie *Big* to join children's museum collection**

PHILADELPHIA, PA – An icon from a Big Hollywood movie about the joys of childhood has entered the collection of Please Touch Museum, the Children's Museum of Philadelphia.

The Walking Piano is the original, 16-foot-long lighted keyboard featured in the 1988 film *Big*, starring Tom Hanks. It will be placed on display in February, to coincide with the museum's 17th annual celebration of music, the Junior Jazz Festival. The interactive keyboard, which is played by the user's feet, was built in Philadelphia by Remo Saraceni, an Italian-born artist, engineer, and lighting designer whose company, Museum Interactive Technologies, is based in the Northern Liberties section of the city.

"I am thrilled to add this icon of the big screen to our collection," said Nancy Kolb, President & CEO of Please Touch Museum. "The movie as a whole and the piano scene in particular captures the innocence and enthusiasm of childhood. Much like a children's museum, it is about the joys of childhood and how, as we grow older, we play less but we never completely lose that desire to be a kid again. We are delighted to be able to share the joy of the *Walking Piano* with our visitors."

The critically-acclaimed film is about a boy who makes a wish "to be big" to a magical fortune-telling machine, and then awakens the next day as an adult. Hanks was nominated for a Best Actor Oscar for his portrayal of the boy trapped in a man's body. In a pivotal scene, he meets a toy company's owner, (Robert Loggia) at a department store, and impresses him with his childlike enthusiasm. They end up playing a duet together on the *Walking Piano*, dancing out a performance of "Chopsticks" and "Heart and Soul." This earns Josh a promotion to a dream job for a kid: testing toys all day long and getting paid for it. With his insight into how children play, he quickly rises up the corporate ladder.

The three-octave piano is a gift to Please Touch Museum from Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shein of Merion, PA, who purchased it for their art collection shortly after the release of the movie.

Please Touch Museum's collection of more than 12,500 toys and games from 1945 to the present is prominently displayed throughout the museum and offers families the opportunity for intergenerational learning and sharing of childhood memories. *Walking Piano* joins the collection of major pieces, which reflect the history of childhood in Philadelphia, including the *Rocket Express*, a kid-sized monorail that carried children above the 8th floor toy department at the famed local John Wanamaker's department store from 1946 to 1984; the set, costumes and video archive of the children's TV show *Captain Noah and his Magical Ark*, which aired from 1967-1994; scenes from the *Enchanted Colonial Village*, which was displayed at Lit Brothers' department store on Market Street, from 1962 to 1975; and the fully restored *Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel*, which operated at a Philadelphia amusement park from 1924-1955.

Saraceni's art is displayed in numerous museums and children's hospitals around the world, including the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. In 2004, he created an interactive four-piece installation in the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's waiting room.

February is all about music at Please Touch Museum. The Junior Jazz Festival features live music and theater performances. The museum will also debut its new music-inspired exhibit, *Rainforest Rhythm*, in which visitors can make their own music with percussion instruments set in a rainforest theme.

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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 www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

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