

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM KICKS OFF COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN TO COMPLETE THE RESTORATION
AND MOVE TO MEMORIAL HALL IN FAIRMOUNT PARK**

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Please Touch Museum, The Children’s Museum of Philadelphia, today invited the Greater Philadelphia community to help “pave the way” to its new home in Memorial Hall. With just one year to go before the museum’s momentous move to the National Historic Landmark in Fairmount Park, Please Touch has launched the Community Phase of its capital campaign, inviting families, individuals, and community organizations to have their names engraved on a limited number of pavers at the entrance to Memorial Hall, arranged to make a delightful “sidewalk maze” for kids to enjoy.

“Today, we invite everyone throughout the region to help us reach the finish line. In years to come, when eager families and schoolchildren visit Please Touch Museum, they will see the names of those who helped pave the way for Philadelphia’s magnificent children’s museum,” said Nancy D. Kolb, President and CEO of Please Touch Museum. “Memorial Hall has an extraordinary past, and it is a thrill to be a part of its bright future. This campaign provides everyone with an opportunity to be a permanent part of a building that stands as the pride of Philadelphia, and to have their names seen by the millions who will visit.”

The Museum’s ambitious capital campaign, the largest in the museum’s 31-year history, to date has raised \$59 million of the \$88 million cost of expanding, renovating and moving to Memorial Hall. The Community Phase is one of several initiatives by the museum to raise the remaining \$29 million in time for the fall 2008 grand opening of the new Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park. The museum is seeking support from individuals, foundations and corporations through a number of sponsorship opportunities, including naming rights to the museum’s six exhibit zones, the building’s historic Great Hall, brand new Carousel House, and others.

“With one year to go before our grand opening, we are now reaching out more widely to museum members and friends who share in our conviction that a new children’s museum will be central to cultural growth in our region,” said Elizabeth B. Cartmell, Chairperson of Please Touch Museum’s Board of Directors. “The generosity that has come from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia has been fantastic. Support has come from corporations, foundations and individuals who clearly recognize the economic value and the benefits to children that will come with the expanded Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall. Whether it’s through the creation of the family-friendly Centennial District in Fairmount Park, more revenue from tourism, or increased access to an incredible family learning experience, surely every person in our region will be touched by this project.”

The Community Phase of the campaign includes:

Induction into the **1876 Society (\$1,876)**: Donors will have their name enshrined in the Centennial Exploration Exhibit, which features a spectacular scale model of the 1876 Centennial fairgrounds, created in 1889 to commemorate the world’s fair.

Support of the exhibit of the original set of the children’s TV show **Captain Noah and His Magical Ark (\$1,000)**.

Support of the new **Please Touch Playhouse Theater (\$500)**

Engraved **Paver** (with a brief message of your choice) placed in the maze at the entrance to Memorial Hall
(\$250 and up)

If you are interested in supporting Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park, call (215) 963-0667 or visit www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

About Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park

One of America's first examples of Beaux-Arts architecture, Memorial Hall was constructed to be the Art Gallery of the 1876 United States Centennial Exhibition—a World's Fair attended by nearly 10 million people—and was the first home to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Since agreeing to an 80-year lease on February 14, 2005, Please Touch has been engaged in a major gifts capital campaign to raise funds to restore Memorial Hall and create a much larger museum where families can explore interactive exhibits, and children learn through play.

Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park will have six exhibit zones that include expanded versions of favorite Please Touch Museum experiences like the Supermarket, the River, Wonderland, and the SEPTA Bus; three exhibit areas designed for infants and toddlers under 3; an exhibit about the 1876 Centennial that includes a model of the Exhibition fairgrounds, presented to the City of Philadelphia in 1889; a 40-foot interpretation of the Statue of Liberty's arm and torch created out of toys by found object artist Leo Sewell; and classics from the history of childhood in Philadelphia, including the original Rocket Express monorail from the John Wanamaker toy department (1946-1984), the set from the children's TV show Captain Noah and his Magical Ark (1967-1994), and a seasonal display of the Enchanted Colonial Village from Lit Brothers Department Store (1962-1975). Housed in a 9,000 square-foot glass addition will be a restored 1924 Dentzel Carousel, which originally operated at Woodside Park, located less than 10 blocks from Memorial Hall. Visitor amenities include a restaurant, the Kids' Store offering a wide range of toys, books, games and apparel, and family restrooms.

Construction continues inside and out of Memorial Hall. Last spring, crews washed more than a century's worth of dirt and grime from the exterior granite walls of the 131-year-old structure. New windows were put in place throughout the fall, while inside the soaring Great Hall was being returned to its original splendor, with repairs to the crumbling, decorative plaster and a return to the bright paint colors which greeted visitors in 1876. The architectural firm Kise, Straw & Kolodner of Philadelphia and contractors Keating, Bittenbender & McCrae, AJV are responsible for the overall design and construction. Overseeing the construction are Please Touch Museum and NorthStar Advisors.

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Please Touch Museum® 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 seven days a week from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.95 for adults and children age one and over. Children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-963-0667, visit our web site at www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.