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Please Touch Museum to Celebrate 40 Years of Learning through Play
Philadelphia landmark will host 40th birthday party on Sunday, October 2;
All guests to receive 40% off admission

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Please Touch Museum – the iconic Children’s Museum of Philadelphia located in Fairmount Park’s historic Memorial Hall – will ring in its 40th birthday on October 2 with a celebration of its long legacy and bright and vibrant future. In honor of its 40 years of providing children opportunities to learn through play, the Museum will offer all guests 40 percent discounted admission to the birthday celebration, and the Museum’s Kids Shop will feature toys from each decade of the past 40 years. The 40th birthday party, sponsored in part by ShopRite, will include a presentation by Mayor Jim Kenney, live music by Steve Pullara and the Cool Beans Band, and dancing with Philadelphia-based dancer and choreographer Roger Lee. The Museum will open on October 2 at 11 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

“Throughout the past 40 years, Please Touch Museum has followed our founders’ vision to serve as a champion of early childhood learning and the leading voice for the power of purposeful play for children,” said Patricia D. Wellenbach, President and Chief Executive Officer, Please Touch Museum. “This birthday celebrates our legacy, but most importantly, provides us an opportunity to celebrate the vibrant future of this museum, which will thrive and continue to provide magical moments for children and their families for 40 more years and beyond.”

“Please Touch Museum is part of the fabric of Philadelphia,” adds Mayor Jim Kenney. “Its invaluable and nationally-recognized work over the past 40 years is a great source of pride for our city.” Mayor Kenney continues, “The Museum’s impact on early childhood learning and its ongoing commitment to communities of all backgrounds demonstrates the important work we share advancing fundamental skills for our city’s young children.”

Founded in 1976 by Montessori educator Portia Sperr, Please Touch Museum has flourished into a nationally-recognized premier children’s museum with unparalleled expertise in early childhood education and play, welcoming millions of visitors through its doors in 40 years. The Museum began as a 2,200-square-foot pilot project in Philadelphia’s Academy of Natural Sciences, and expanded in 1978 to a larger space at 1910 Cherry Street. In 1983, the Museum Board of Directors approved the purchase and renovation of a three-story, 30,000-square-foot building at 210 North 21st Street. After establishing its roots here, the Museum grew
attendance by 70 percent and memberships by 52 percent, and earned accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. Before long, the Museum expanded its exhibit space by 40 percent by purchasing the building adjacent to it on North 21st Street. While approaching its 30-year anniversary, Please Touch Museum Board of Directors began an extensive, three-year restoration of historic Memorial Hall, which was beautifully concepted and constructed in Fairmount Park for the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition, the first World’s Fair in the United States. In 2008, the doors opened to the Museum’s new home, which features a restored carousel from 1903-1908 and the impressive 40-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty’s arm and torch, handcrafted with common items such as children’s toys by famed artist Leo Sewell, that greets every visitor upon entering Memorial Hall.

“We are excited to commemorate such an important milestone for an institution that is so deeply rooted into the hearts and minds of our community’s families,” concluded Wellenbach. “Every day, we have the distinct privilege of watching grandparents and parents relive their favorite Please Touch Museum memories here again with the newest members of their families, and we encourage all generations who have been touched by this wonderful place to join us in celebrating 40 magical years of learning through play.”

The Museum will continue its 40th birthday celebration throughout the month of October featuring special programs, toys and music from each decade, and conclude with its fundraising gala exclusively for adults on Thursday, November 3.

About Please Touch Museum
Please Touch Museum is dedicated to enriching the lives of children by creating learning opportunities through play. Recognized locally and nationally as one of the best children’s museums, Please Touch Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $17 for adults and children age one and over. Children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-581-3181, or visit our website at www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

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