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PHILADELPHIA – Jan 9, 2020 – State Senator Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia/Montgomery) announced that $1.9 million in Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) funding had been awarded to the Please Touch Museum in the 7th Senatorial District.

The grant will help fund repair of the Museum’s marble floor, creating a safer experience for visitors while also allowing the Museum to maximize the space at Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park. The Please Touch Museum is toured by more than 500,000 people annually. Each year, over 24,000 school children enjoy the Please Touch Museum, including over 14,000 Philadelphia School District children who visit the Museum for free.

“The Please Touch Museum is a cornerstone for developing the young minds of our city and region, which is why I am proud to announce this grant,” Sen. Hughes said. “The Museum has survived for more than 40 years as a result of its innovative programming and a unique approach. I am hopeful that the funding we are announcing today will help provide positive experiences for generations to come.”

Repairing the floor will allow the Please Touch Museum to continue its mission to create learning opportunities through play, which develop the intellectual, social and emotional skills a child needs to be a thoughtful, creative and compassionate adult.

“Repairing the 142-year-old floor of Memorial Hall is a mission critical project for our Museum,” said Patricia D. Wellenbach, President & CEO of the Please Touch Museum. “As important as it is for us to invest in vibrant, engaging and transformative exhibits such as America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far and the forthcoming Centennial Innovations, it is equally important that we invest in the beautiful and historic building we proudly call home. We are deeply grateful to Governor Wolf for the approval of this RACP Grant as well as Congressman Dwight Evans, State Senator Vincent Hughes and Representative Morgan Cephas for their continued advocacy on behalf of the Please Touch Museum. Truly, this grant will help further our mission and deliver on our promise to be a leading 21st Century children’s museum.”

The Please Touch Museum is reimagining the way it engages its visitors with new spaces and exhibits at the Museum, including:

Centennial Innovations - This new permanent gallery, which opens in Spring 2020, will explore how creativity and critical thinking skills can inspire children to solve problems, right wrongs and transform our world. Building upon PTM’s commitment to address contemporary social issues and represent Philadelphia’s culturally diverse populations,
Centennial Innovations will reimagine how the 1876 Centennial World's Fair is celebrated and understood. The content of this new 5,000 square-foot exhibit will ask both children and adults to consider the meaning of innovation through the question, “If you could change the world...?” With multi-sensory interactives emphasizing the diverse people and inventions that made history in 1876, visitors will be inspired to brainstorm their own answers to this all-important question.

**Cents and Sensibility** – Launched in 2019, this exhibit focuses on financial learning for the Museum’s young audience while also addressing the needs of the entire family. The exhibit, sponsored by PNC, centers around the core concepts of earn, spend, share and save, which form the foundation on which additional learning threads can be built.

**Creative Arts Studio** – The Please Touch Museum transformed existing space into an expanded arts studio in 2018 to help bridge the gap left by diminished arts programming in schools.

“Children have a natural sense of curiosity and wonder, and the Please Touch Museum fully encourages fostering these experiences. It is a cultural institution for the City of Philadelphia that provides a great opportunity for children and families to spend time together while experiencing its educational and entertainment components,” said state Rep. Morgan Cephas, D-Phila. “I am thrilled to have helped the Please Touch Museum received this RACP grant to help continue its mission in offering such wonderful experiences for our children in the years to come.”

“The Please Touch Museum is an important educational institution for the 3rd Congressional District, for the city of Philadelphia and for so many children and families in the region,” said U.S. Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Philadelphia) in praising the Museum and its mission.

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