



**Change a child's life as they discover
the power of learning through play.**

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**In Response to COVID-19, Please Touch Museum Coordinates &
Assembles 1,000 Summer Discovery Backpacks to Support
Social & Emotional Learning for Children in Parkside**

PHILADELPHIA (July 6, 2020) – Please Touch Museum (PTM), a national leader in children's museums, today brought together volunteers in Memorial Hall – all socially distanced and wearing masks – to assemble 1,000 Summer Discovery Backpacks for young children in West Philadelphia's Parkside neighborhood. With virtual learning now concluded for the academic year and many traditional summer programs, camps and events cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PTM designed and sourced these backpacks to encourage children, ages 4-8, living closest to the Museum, to continue building critical social and emotional skills through play during these summer months in preparation for the next school year.

With a lead gift of \$25,000 from the [PNC Foundation](#) through its "PNC Grow Up Great" initiative, the PTM Summer Discovery Backpacks will include a PTM-created and designed Family Activity Book, which provides children (and their grown-ups) with various learning games and activities to be shared together. Pop-Out Mini Playgrounds, which are miniature versions of this much-loved Museum exhibit with its blue foam blocks, will be included in every backpack, courtesy of [Imagination Playground®](#). One thousand copies of "The Little Engine That Could," will be included as an in-kind donation by [Penguin Random House](#), as will 1,000 copies of "My Quiet Ship," with associated giveaway items such as socks and stickers, donated by author [Hallee Adelman](#). [Keystone First](#) provided financial and in-kind support, which includes 1,000 hand sanitizers, 1,000 sweatbands and 1,000 toothbrushes for inclusion in the backpacks. Additional financial support from the Please Touch Museum Board of Trustees and the Parkside Advisory Council have allowed PTM to include other fun items for play and learning such as hand lenses for nature exploration, colorful sidewalk chalk to create street art, and a beach ball to further develop gross motor skills.

“The rhythms and routines of the school year and summertime and how children play together have been deeply affected by the experiences of these past months,” said Patricia D. Wellenbach, President & CEO, Please Touch Museum. “Although the Museum is closed right now, we felt it was important to outreach to the children and families of Parkside to remind them that even though we can’t be together right now, there are so many ways to learn through play, even at home. With the Summer Discovery Backpacks, we have created a special resource for young learners, which we hope will engage them throughout July and August, and help to prepare them for the return to school in September, however that experience may be. We are grateful to our lead sponsor, The PNC Foundation, for stepping forward so quickly to help bring this idea to life. We are also delighted by the generous financial and in-kind support we received from Keystone First, Parkside Advisory Council, Imagination Playground®, Penguin Random House, Hallee Adelman and the Please Touch Museum Board of Trustees. Their enthusiastic support, coupled with the on-site support of our socially distanced volunteers in assembling these backpacks, reflects the commitment we all feel to the Parkside community and all Philadelphia’s children.”

Joe Meterchick, PNC Bank regional president, Philadelphia, Delaware and Southern New Jersey, echoed these sentiments saying, “We are proud to support the Please Touch Museum in producing and delivering one thousand Summer Discovery Backpacks to children in West Philadelphia. In the wake of COVID-19, an important role we will continue to play is in supporting our community and addressing the needs of our youngest learners. We hope all the children who receive these backpacks enjoy them as much as PNC, with Please Touch Museum, enjoyed creating them.”

Please Touch Museum worked closely with its Parkside Community Advisory Council to identify various distribution points – small and large – which reach deep into the Parkside community. These distributions sites include, among others, Parkside CDC’s PlayStreets Program, the Mantua Haverford Community Center, and the Action for Early Learning Summer Outreach program of the People’s Emergency Center.

For more information regarding Please Touch Museum, please visit:

www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

About Please Touch Museum

Please Touch Museum’s mission is to change a child’s life as they discover the power of learning through play. Recognized locally and nationally as one of the best children’s museums in the United States, Please Touch Museum has been temporarily closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic and anticipates re-opening its doors in late August, with strict adherence to CDC guidelines as well as city and state mandates.