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**THE JIM HENSON COMPANY TO ACCEPT GREAT FRIEND TO KIDS AWARD
— Association of Children's Museums Recognizes the Leader in Family
Entertainment at InterActivity 2011: Innovation is Child's Play —**

ARLINGTON, VA — The Association of Children's Museums (ACM) will present its Great Friend to Kids Award to The Jim Henson Company at 9:00 a.m. on Sat, May 21, at the Hyatt Regency Houston. The Great Friend to Kids Award is presented annually at ACM's InterActivity conference and honors organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions to strengthening education and advancing the interests of children. The Jim Henson Company was selected for its longtime commitment to producing innovative, family programming that creatively addresses a range of topics and issues with compassion, humor and whimsy.

Members of the media are welcome to attend the Great Friend to Kids Award plenary session; contact ACM to obtain a media pass or for interview requests.

"Henson's love for entertaining families is only exceeded by its drive for creating enchanting worlds," says ACM Executive Director Janet Rice Elman. "Henson's "Sid the Science Kid" and "Dinosaur Train" on PBS KIDS give preschoolers a daily dose of great science programming."

For more than 50 years, The Jim Henson Company has innovatively used puppetry, animatronics and digital animation to tell stories for families. Founded in 1955, Jim Henson first named his company Muppets, Inc., after his puppet creations. "The Muppets," along with several productions including "Fraggle Rock" and "Labyrinth," helped the company achieve worldwide acclaim and to date more than 50 Emmy Awards and nine Grammy Awards.

Today, Jim Henson's adult children Brian, Lisa, Cheryl, John and Heather run the company, with Brian and Lisa serving as chairman and CEO respectively. Lisa Henson, will accept the Great Friend to Kids Award on behalf of the company. During the award ceremony, Ms. Henson will provide a keynote speech on creativity as a necessary ingredient for innovation and the evolution of The Jim Henson Company.

Today, The Jim Henson Company units also include Jim Henson's Creature Shop™ — a pre-eminent character-building and visual effects group with international film, television and advertising clients — and Henson Recording Studios, known for its world-class blend of state-of-the-art and vintage equipment. The company recently announced the upcoming production of "Pajanimals," a new musical preschool series starring four adorable puppets who help children discover how cozy and safe nighttime can really be when accompanied by friendship and songs. To learn more about the company, visit <http://henson.com>.

ACM initiated the *ACM Great Friend to Kids Award* in 1991. Past recipients include Search Institute (2010), which was selected for it for its high-quality research and evaluation that deepens public knowledge of young people; Boys and Girls Clubs of America (2009); Dr. Joe L. Frost (2008), the early architects of Head Start program, Dr. Bettye Caldwell, Dr. Julius B. Richmond and Dr. Edward F. Zigler (2007), Dr. T. Berry Brazelton (2006), Erikson Institute (2005), Kevin Clash (2004), Barbara Bush (2003), UNICEF (2002), Dr. David Elkind (2001),

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Dr. Robert Coles (2000), Children's Television Workshop (1999), Hillary Rodham Clinton (1998), Dr. James P. Comer (1997), Fred Rogers (1996), Dr. Ernest L. Boyer (1995), Peggy Charren (1994), Marian Wright Edelman (1993), Dr. Howard Gardner (1992), and Michael Spock (1991).

More than 800 participants from museums, universities, educational organizations and others are expected to attend InterActivity 2011: *Innovation is Child's Play*, which runs May 19-21. The Children's Museum of Houston will serve as the local host for the conference. InterActivity 2011 will explore the vital role children's museums play in building children's 21st century skills and in connecting with audiences in new ways.

Additional keynote speakers for the conference include Steven Berlin Johnson and Milton Chen, Ph.D. Johnson, author of *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*, will talk about the impact science, technology and media have on modern life on Thursday, May 19. On Friday, May 20, Dr. Chen will provide insight from his groundbreaking book *Education Nation: Six Leading Edges of Innovation in Our Schools* and from his work at The George Lucas Educational Foundation, where he is currently executive director, emeritus.

More than five dozen sessions, five salon discussions and multiple study tours and workshops are fully described in the InterActivity 2011 Final Program, available in PDF form at www.ChildrensMuseums.org.

About Association of Children's Museums

The Association of Children's Museums provides leadership, professional development and resources for its member organizations and individuals. There are approximately 400 children's museums around the world. Children's museums annually reach more than 31 million children and families. For more than 112 years, children's museums have helped innovate and redefine the traditional museum world by creating places where all kids can learn through play with the caring adults in their lives. For links to ACM's international list of museums and more information about InterActivity 2011, visit www.ChildrensMuseums.org.

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