

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 14, 2009

Contact: Diane Kopasz, Association of Children's Museums, 202-898-1080



ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS AND MEMBERS AWARDED FOR CONNECTING PEOPLE TO INFORMATION AND IDEAS

— *Institute of Museum and Library Services Awards \$1.4 Million to Children's Museum Field* —

Washington, D.C. — With less than 350 open children's museums in the U.S., children's museums are one of the smallest segments of the museum community. Small hands and developing minds that have an irrepressible need to play in order to learn compose the target audience for children's museums. And yet there is nothing small in the way the children's museums are impacting communities. Recently the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) — the primary source of federal funds for the nation's museums and libraries — awarded several organizations in the children's museum field with grants and honors totaling more than \$1.4 million.

Association of Children's Museums (ACM) was awarded an IMLS 21st Century Museum Professionals grant (\$143,833) for its Key Indicators and Ratios Benchmarking Calculator project. ACM's Benchmarking Calculator, which will be developed with an advisory committee and other partners, will be a user-friendly tool for children's museum professionals to produce on-demand reports of key performance indicators and ratios. Such reports will allow individual museums to examine and compare institutional performance, as well as allow others to evaluate the impact the field is making on children, schools and communities.

"Great organizations are defined by their consistent, systematic measurement of performance," says IMLS Director Anne-Imelda Radice. "IMLS regards the ACM Key Indicators and Ratios Benchmarking Calculator project as a prototype for a larger national effort to standardize data collection and reporting across the museum field."

Two out of the five museums selected to receive the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service include children's museums: Children's Museum of Pittsburgh (PA) and Cincinnati Museum Center (OH) — home of Duke Energy Children's Museum. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries that make extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental and social contributions. In addition to the National Medal, which will be awarded in an upcoming Washington, D.C. ceremony, each institution receives a \$10,000 award.

"ACM is proud that Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and Duke Energy Children's Museum at Cincinnati Museum Center have each been recognized for contributing to the cultural and educational infrastructure that supports their diverse communities," says ACM Executive Director Janet Rice Elman.

One children's museum received an IMLS National Leadership Demonstration Grant. National Leadership Grants address needs in education, health, computer literacy or problem solving skills.

- Children's Museum of Manhattan will use its grant (\$828,143) to implement The National Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Program in partnership with ACM, the National Institutes of Health, the Louisiana Children's Museum and public housing projects in NYC. The program will adapt the National Institutes of Health's "We Can!" curriculum to provide community-wide leadership in the fight against childhood obesity for children under 8 and their parents, including a rigorous two year evaluation of the program. CMOM will also create a permanent health exhibition and develop replicable plans for small children's museums to create their own health exhibitions.

Two children's museums received IMLS National Leadership Planning Grants.

- The Supporting Early Literacy Learning project will partner Minnesota Children's Museum, Dakota County Library System, Hennepin County Library System and Saint Paul Public Library System to develop and test innovative literacy environments and programs. The IMLS grant (\$50,000) will allow the partners to explore new directions in the ways that libraries and museums bring their unique expertise together for successful collaborations.
- Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago (Glenview, IL) will use its grant (\$69,188) for its Traveling Exhibit Seed Program, a collaborative planning project with ACM that will create a leadership model for the making and distribution of developmentally appropriate, engaging traveling exhibits. In addition, this project will result in the Traveling Exhibit Support Action Plan, developed with an emphasis on serving the needs of smaller and emerging institutions that have limited administrative and financial resources. Once complete, this project will foster the production of traveling exhibits designed for children up to age 8 that will benefit children's museums nationwide.

Finally, ACM member The Lawrence Hall of Science (Berkeley, CA) received an IMLS 21st Century Museum Professionals grant (\$313,843) for its Museum Educators Reflecting on Practice project. The Lawrence Hall of Science will test the Reflecting on Practice Curriculum and the Leading Reflection Program, which are designed to engage mid-career museum educators in extensive ongoing study of science pedagogy and reflective video techniques. Later, these educators will provide professional development for early career educators using the same curriculum and tools.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.imls.gov.

About the Association of Children's Museums

ACM is a professional service organization for children's museums around the world. Founded in 1962 as a support group for directors of children's museums in the United States, ACM's mission is to build the capacity of children's museums to serve as town squares where play inspires creativity and lifelong learning. Children's museums are vital community institutions that impact the way children play and learn about the world around them. Over the last 15 years, the number of children's museums in the United States has grown by 100 percent. Nearly 30 million children and families annually visit children's museums. To learn how to make the most out of a children's museum visit and to access links to children's museum in the United States and around the globe, visit www.ChildrensMuseums.org.

###