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MuseumLab® Celebrates Its One Year Birthday

The Anniversary Highlights Successful Exhibits, Programs, Partnerships and Awards

PITTSBURGH (April 27, 2020) — MuseumLab, the innovative learning space from Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, celebrates its first anniversary on Monday, April 27. And what an extraordinary year it’s been! MuseumLab is a new museum located adjacent to the Children’s Museum, offering growing kids cutting-edge experiences in art, tech and making. With three exhibit spaces, program and rental space, a host of commissioned artwork and unique camps, workshops and afterschool activities, MuseumLab sits at the crossroads of interactive museum, learning lab and one of the coolest designed spaces in town.

It all takes place in a “beautiful ruin” located right next door to the Children’s Museum, the former Carnegie Free Library of Allegheny, which opened in 1890.

“The past year at MuseumLab has been absolutely incredible. We are so proud of the team and partners who have made MuseumLab such a success, by delivering educational and hands on experiences,” said Jane Werner, Executive Director of Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh. “After launching last year, we are so excited to celebrate this milestone and continue to plan for growth in the future.”

Partner organizations who share space in MuseumLab and help shape its programs include Carnegie Mellon University’s Entertainment Technology Center and Masters of Arts Management Program, SLB Radio Productions, Allies for Children, University of Pittsburgh School of Education and Manchester Academic Charter Middle School, whose 120 students attend school on MuseumLab’s second floor.

After opening its doors in April 2019, MuseumLab welcomed more than 37,022 children and families. Its creation was also the final step in creating the largest cultural campus for children in the country.

Some of the innovative exhibits and programs offered in MuseumLab over the past year include:

I. Exhibits

- **Make Lab** - This extension of the Children’s Museum’s expertise in maker education offers activities and workshops in fiber arts, woodworking, laser cutting and more, including unique youth workshops such as LED bracelets, polymer clay tiny food and custom T-Shirt design with a vinyl cutter.

- **Nek Chand's Secret Garden** - This inaugural exhibit in Studio Lab was an immersive installation of the Museum's collection of human and animal mosaic sculptures by Indian artist Nek Chand.
- **channel** - an exhibition showcasing painting, photography, installation art and multimedia pieces from 10 young artists that highlight communication across generations, centering on the perspective of youth and its powerful messages.

II. Technology

Building on a decade long partnership with CMU's Entertainment Technology Center, Tech Lab provides the chance for the middle school aged child to engage with students building cutting edge projects and systems.

III. Collections

A display of artifacts from *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* called **Fred Rogers Memories** opened October 2019 with original Mister Rogers' sweater and sneakers; original puppets from the show such as King Friday XIII, Queen Sarah Saturday and X the Owl; red sweaters for photo ops; candid Fred Rogers photos by Lynn Johnson; video clips from *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*; and an upright piano where visitors can sit down at and play their favorite neighborhood tune.

IV. Artwork

- **Over View**

Over View is located in MuseumLab's Grable Gallery. The 34-foot x 38-foot installation, made of printed and cut textile suspended over an aluminum frame, depicts a leaded glass ceiling that once enclosed the room before it was removed during a previous building renovation in the 1970s. Like Renaissance-era trompe l'oeil ceilings, *Over View* uses the illusionary depth of perspective to create spaces beyond the existing architecture. Standing at the center of the room, the intricately patterned original ceiling can be seen projecting upward away from you. From other points of view, the installation becomes an abstract pattern of lines projecting down toward the floor. A layered, deep graphic, *Over View* presents a visual puzzle or device controlled by each visitor to MuseumLab as they move through the room.

- **Gymlacium in The Stacks – COMING SOON**

This artwork by Manca Ahlin will transform the former Carnegie Library steel bookshelves (affectionately known as The Stacks) into a three-story artwork made up of woven rope sections integrated throughout the bookshelves framework. Visitors will cross a bridge, climb a ladder, navigate slopes, hang on a rope swing and lounge about as they explore this unique landscape.

In addition to celebrating a first birthday, MuseumLab recently received two prestigious awards:

- **LEED® Gold** - MuseumLab achieved Gold LEED certification for implementing practical and measurable strategies and solutions in areas including sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. Green buildings allow companies to operate more sustainably and give the people inside them a healthier, more comfortable space to work.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is the most widely used green building rating system in the world and an international symbol of excellence. Through design, construction and operations practices that improve environmental and human health, LEED-certified buildings are helping to make the world more sustainable.

"The MuseumLab project embodies so many principles of sustainability, but it is a particularly outstanding example of how to achieve both occupant health and energy performance together," stated

Pete Jefferson, Principal at BranchPattern. “These goals were established by the Children’s Museum early in the MuseumLab project, and were then instrumental in guiding the project team throughout design and construction.” Jefferson went on to state that “It is appropriate then that this project represents one of the first buildings in Pittsburgh certified under LEED Version 4, going far beyond the minimums to achieve a Gold level certification. On top of that, the Children’s Museum remained engaged during operations to manage the facility in such a way that they exceeded the energy performance goals of the Pittsburgh 2030 District. MuseumLab is the first existing building to accomplish these goals in Pittsburgh, and by doing so inside 130-year-old library, they clearly have raised the bar for how we can imagine using Pittsburgh’s existing building stock to benefit future generations.”

- **2020 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award on a Construction Project – Rehabilitation**

MuseumLab was one of 24 projects across the Commonwealth honored by Preservation Pennsylvania for excellence and innovation in preservation practice. Dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant places, “The Historic Preservation Awards recognize a passion for the past, applaud achievements in the present and inspire a history-rich future for Pennsylvania,” said Mindy Crawford, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania.

In addition to these two prestigious awards, MuseumLab has garnered national attention and accolades during its first year of operation, including:

- Recognition as the first building in the United States to achieve a Universal Design certificate from the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA) at the University of Buffalo for its design that is welcoming to all.
- Named a finalist in a competition hosted by South by Southwest, focused on designing for learning environments.
- Received the Vanguard Award by the Green Building Alliance
- Received Award of for Special Achievement from PA Museums

For photos of MuseumLab click here: <https://www.museumlab.org/gallery/>

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About **MuseumLab**

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