



For Immediate Release

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Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Receives \$2.49 Million Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

New Exhibits and Resources on Building Character in Children Will be Created in Partnership with Fred Rogers Productions

PITTSBURGH (December 10, 2024)—Children's Museum of Pittsburgh has received a \$2.49 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to develop a new permanent exhibit, a traveling exhibit and companion programs and resources that explore kindness, generosity, compassion, respect, bravery, resilience and other character traits that help the development and exploration of character in young children.

The Children's Museum is partnering with Fred Rogers Productions (FRP), a long-time collaborator and widely respected children's media company with a focus on early childhood development, in this effort. It will work closely with FRP to develop the new exhibits and resources drawing from the collection of children's series created or inspired by Fred Rogers - *Donkey Hodie*, *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. The exhibits are slated to open in mid - late 2026 at the Children's Museum.

The project is being funded through Fostering Character Through Children's Museums, a Lilly Endowment initiative designed to help children's museums develop new or expand existing efforts that explore and encourage the development of positive character traits among children

and youth. Children's Museum of Pittsburgh is one of 15 children's museums around the nation being funded through the initiative.

"We're thrilled to be a part of this national initiative and embark on work that fosters character development through informal learning," says Jane Werner, Executive Director of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. "It naturally builds on work the Museum has done over the last two decades to build empathy and kindness in children, and we anticipate that it will provide key insights into the vital work of understanding early childhood development."

Over the last 30 years, the Children's Museum has become a leader in developing hands-on exhibits that explore and encourage social-emotional development in young children, informed by its extensive research on how children learn in informal settings and a long history of exhibit prototyping. Notable exhibits in this effort include *XOXO: An Exhibit about Love & Forgiveness* and its pop-up adjuncts, as well as its collaborations with FRP on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood: A Traveling Exhibit* and *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: A Grr-ific Exhibit*. The Museum will draw on this breath of experience in the creation of the new exhibits that explore fostering character development in children.

In November 2023, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh was one of 23 museums who received a one-year planning grant from Lilly Endowment to explore ideas for the Fostering Character Through Children's Museums initiative. Through tools such as community events, talkback boards, visitor focus groups and prototyping of exhibit components, Children's Museum staff gained a better understanding of character development in children and families and how to create an interactive exhibit that promotes this.

The Children's Museum has offered joyful, creative and curiosity-invoking experiences for learners of all ages for decades. These exhibits are characterized by being open ended and nonlinear, leaving room for visitors of all backgrounds to bring their personal experiences into their museum experience. This approach allows the new exhibits on character development that funding from Lilly Endowment will support to impact diverse audiences as it travels across the country. The Museum's research efforts that are integral in the creation of all of its exhibits will also provide insight for the growing body of knowledge about fostering character development in children.

"Children's museums are places where children of all ages can learn informally, discovering new ideas through play, multi-sensory experiences and self-expression," said Ted Maple, Lilly Endowment's vice president for education and youth programs. "We are excited to see how the museums funded through this initiative will help children and their families to explore various character traits and reflect together on ways these traits can be practiced and strengthened."

Get the latest news and updates from Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh on its website, pittsburghkids.org, and social channels, facebook.com/Pittsburgh and Instagram, @pghkids.

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About Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh

Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh provides innovative and inclusive museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, curiosity and kindness for all learners. We forge connections with artists, community partners and neighbors to work on behalf of children, youth and families. Our vision is to transform education. Permanent hands-on, interactive exhibit areas include The Art Studio, Garage, Waterplay, Kindness Gallery, Backyard and MAKESHOP®.

About Fred Rogers Productions

Fred Rogers Productions was founded by Fred Rogers in 1971 as the non-profit producer of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* for PBS. In the years that followed, it created hundreds of episodes of this much-loved program and extended Fred’s values and approach to other efforts in promoting children’s social, emotional and behavioral health while supporting parents, caregivers, teachers and other professionals in their work with children. Fred Rogers Productions continues to build on Fred’s legacy in innovative ways through a wide variety of media and engages new generations of children and families with his timeless wisdom. The company’s highly rated children’s series, including *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, *Peg + Cat*, *Odd Squad* and *Through the Woods*, have earned 30 Emmy® Awards among other important honors. The company’s latest series are *Donkey Hodie*, the innovative puppet series inspired by characters from *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, and *Alma’s Way*, an animated series created by Sonia Manzano. Fred Rogers Productions strives to inspire a lifelong enthusiasm for learning through its series as well as efforts beyond broadcast including games and interactive offerings, community engagement activities, and much more. For more information, visit www.fredrogers.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly and his sons, Eli and J.K. Jr., through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although gifts of stock remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. The Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion.