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Children's Museum of Denver Announces Leadership Transition

Mike Yankovich becomes interim president as Tom Downey moves to the Marquez Foundation

Denver, CO – Mike Yankovich, current Children's Museum chief operating officer, has been appointed by the board of directors as the interim Museum president, effective immediately. Tom Downey, president of the Children's Museum of Denver since 2005, will leave the Museum to become president of the Timothy & Bernadette Marquez Foundation.

"The board was unanimous in selecting Yankovich as the interim president and is excited to have him at the helm during this period of transition," said Deborah Wapensky, chair of the Museum's board of directors.

Yankovich has been a leader in the museum field for more than 14 years and is a long-time advocate for innovative approaches to early childhood education. He has been with the Children's Museum of Denver since 2003, serving in a number of capacities including director of education, vice president of guest experience and chief operations officer. Yankovich has focused on developing high-quality, interactive exhibits and educational programs and has helped position the Children's Museum of Denver as the leading informal learning institution for young children in the Front Range. Yankovich also serves on the board of directors for Qualistar Early Learning and the board of advisors for the Denver Preschool Program.

"With an exciting new exhibit, Bubbles, opening this spring and with a fresh, innovative approach to exhibit design and program development, the best is yet to come for the Children's Museum of Denver," says Yankovich. "I am thrilled to be a part of shaping its future at this time of growth and change."

Yankovich's established leadership role at the Museum and in the community will help to provide a seamless transition as the Museum's board of directors focuses on the search for a new president. Downey will continue at the Children's Museum in a transitional role until December 15, 2009, and will then begin his position at the Marquez Foundation. "I have been incredibly honored to have served with a team as motivated, well-tenured and experienced as the staff at the Children's Museum. While I will

miss the team greatly, I could not pass up the opportunity offered by Tim and Bernie Marquez to support an array of nonprofits pursuing improved education and health for the community,” says Downey.

While at the Museum, Downey helped build a dynamic staff that has made remarkable strides in positioning the Children’s Museum of Denver as a resource and authority for early childhood education. Accomplishments in recent years have included: 1) a 41% increase in Museum attendance; 2) the creation of long-term objectives and goals to support Museum growth; and 3) the continued success of the Museum’s Sponsored Admissions Program, currently providing more than 12,000 free admissions to low-income children annually.

About the Children’s Museum of Denver

Since its inception in 1973, the Children’s Museum of Denver has been a place that ignites and fosters a great love of learning. Our mission is to create a community where children and their grownups learn through play.

The Museum provides rich play experiences and a dynamic learning environment to help young children prepare for their future. The Children's Museum of Denver is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that relies heavily on the support of Museum friends.

The Children’s Museum of Denver is located at I-25 and 23rd Avenue (exit 211), in the Platte River Valley. For more details about the Museum, and its programs and events please visit www.mychildsmuseum.org.

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