



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Thousands of Youngsters Enjoy Free Visits to Children's Museum**

DENVER, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 – The Children's Museum of Denver provided more than 12,000 free admissions to low-income children and their adult caregivers during the past fiscal year, thanks to the generosity of corporations, foundations and individuals.

Donations from these groups helped underwrite the Museum's Sponsored Admissions Program, which targets low-income elementary schools and daycare centers. Students from eligible schools and daycare centers are invited to visit the Museum for free play, or enjoy one of the Museum's facilitated educational programs, either in their schools or at the Museum.

In addition, each participating child receives a coupon that can be redeemed for a free, year-long family membership so that the entire household can return to the Museum again and again for more fun and learning.

"When I see the exuberance of the youngsters who visit us through the Sponsored Admissions Program, I am reminded of why we started the program more than a decade ago," said Museum President Tom Downey. "Many of these children have never been here before – and might never have come because of their families' financial resources. We firmly believe that all children, regardless of economic status, should have the opportunity to learn through play at the Children's Museum."

Students who visit through the Sponsored Admissions Program often write thank-you notes to the Museum that illustrate the program's impact: One girl told us, "I know I will [return] because I loved it. In fact, it was better than any place I've ever been." Another wrote, "You are super bat-man nice. I had a fantastic time there."

During the Museum's fiscal year (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009), the Sponsored Admissions Program involved more than 40 elementary schools where at least the majority of students are eligible for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program and more than 25 low-income daycare centers, primarily in Head Start. Overall, eligibility for the lunch program among Sponsored Admissions schools averaged 79%.

In addition to organized group visits involving these schools and daycare centers, the Museum made the program more accessible this year for busy or working families through a new Family Night program. The students at targeted low-income schools – and their immediate families –

were given free admissions and memberships on Wednesdays when the Museum is open until 8 p.m. Nearly 1,200 students and adults came during these family visits.

The Museum is grateful to these supporters for their generous donations to the Sponsored Admissions Program:

CW2 Gives, Colorado Council on the Arts, Comcast Foundation, The Denver Foundation, Denver Post Charities, Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation, Macy's Foundation, Helen McLoraine Children's Museum of Denver Endowment Fund, J.K. Mullen Foundation, Schlessman Family Foundation, Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, Target Corp., U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Xcel Energy Foundation and the Museum's 2008 Birthday Bash gala attendees.

To learn more about the Sponsored Admissions Program or to find out if a specific school would qualify for participation, please contact program manager Jacintha Knox, 303-561-0113.

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