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Children's Museum of the Lowcountry Adopts New Strategic Plan to Guide next five years of growth

Charleston, SC (April 10, 2014) - The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry (CML) announced its new strategic plan to help guide the Museum in its planning, activities and initiatives for the next five years. The detailed plan identifies three strategic goals on which to focus CML's energy and resources through 2018.

The final plan was unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors and has been put into action by Board and staff. As part of its new plan, CML will focus on the POWER OF PLAY and its necessity and benefits for the well-being of all children. CML will work to customize experiences to engage the interests of its most important audience groups while focusing on its current site to help refresh and re-imagine experiences that take place at the Museum. In addition, CML will work to develop more connections with families, partners and the community at large to ensure successful integration of the plan. The strategic framework focuses CML's activities, capabilities and resources on serving children ages Birth - Ten years in families of all backgrounds living in or visiting the Charleston area, with a primary audience of children ages Birth - Five years.

This plan was developed with the help of Jeanne Vergeront of Vergeront Museum Planning, who is also known as the "Godmother of Children's Museums" due to her extensive knowledge, work and experience in the field. Vergeront was also involved in the Museum's initial launch in 2003. The planning process lasted more than nine months and included thoughtful input from CML's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers along with a variety of organizational and community stakeholders. In addition, the Museum took a survey of current CML strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities while conducting an environmental scan of current and future community opportunities and challenges related to the Lowcountry's children.

The plan's outcome is a reflection of Museum leadership's dedication to the well-being of area children, and CML's deliberate effort to outline priorities in order to deliver greater value to its audience groups.

"Our new strategic plan focuses on the full spectrum of our beliefs, including our dedication to ensuring that CML remains a cornerstone of education and play to the Lowcountry community," said Denis Chirles, Executive Director at the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry. "All of the Museum's activities will stem from the principles outlined here and will give us the direction to grow our facility and organization in the best possible way to serve the future leaders of our community."

Anne Marie Hagood, CML Board President, noted, "The Children's Museum has proven itself to be a needed and welcomed partner to the Lowcountry's educational community, and we believe the goals and direction outlined in our new five year plan will enable us to continue to achieve our aspiration to be counted among the best early-childhood education partners in the Lowcountry."

With a sharpened focus on its vision and mission, CML has outlined the following strategic goals for the next five years:

- Play Framework: Explore, consolidate and advance CML's understanding of and distinct approach to play for its audiences; how it will translate its expertise into play and learning experiences and environments and customer service; and how it will communicate its value and benefits to stakeholders and partners.
- Early Connections - Birth to Three: A comprehensive set of services, experiences and supporting practices that enables CML to fully serve its youngest audience and their grownups; contributes to the area's early childhood resources; and distinguishes CML from other early childhood venues through developmentally, "just right" play-based experiences and environments that engage and make young children's potential visible.
- Families Together: A broad, flexible approach to engaging families of all backgrounds with varied interests and children of different ages that is capable of serving the family as a cohesive, on-going group as well as supporting relationships and interactions among family members.

The strategic plan also introduces CML's new mission and vision:

MISSION: Engage young children's potential by inviting families of all backgrounds to explore environments and experiences that spark imagination and stimulate curiosity through the power of play.

VISION: The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry and its stakeholders believe that in the next generation, the Charleston area can become a community where all children enjoy an increasing level of well-being, because:

- It shines a bright light on its youngest citizens as capable, creative and full of promise.
- Its families actively connect around common interests and priorities for their children.
- It values and invests in life-long, life-wide and life-deep learning.
- Its families of all backgrounds appreciate its shared civic, cultural, historic and natural assets.
- It prepares its children to participate in the region's expanding economic opportunities and career prospects.

The full strategic plan can be viewed on CML's website, www.exploreCML.org.

About the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry

The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with a mission to engage young children's potential by inviting families of all backgrounds to explore environments and experiences that spark imagination and stimulate curiosity through the power of play. Open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person, \$8 for SC Residents and free for children less than 12 months of age. For more information please visit our website, www.exploreCML.org.

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