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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Madison Children's Museum Earns 2011 National Medal for Museum Service

MADISON, Wis. (Tuesday, October 25, 2011) — Madison Children's Museum has been awarded the 2011 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, a once-in-a-lifetime honor for any museum or library in the country. Each year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) announces five museums and five libraries from across the country to receive this ultimate recognition.

The medal—the first won by any Wisconsin museum—was announced and celebrated locally this morning at the downtown museum with supporters, member families, staff, legislative representatives, and others connected to the nonprofit institution. The official award will be presented to museum representatives in late winter or early spring in Washington, D.C. Madison Children's Museum will receive \$10,000 for achieving the honor, and the funds will be used to support its Access for Everyone program that affords ALL individuals the opportunity to visit the museum regardless of economic, physical, or other barriers. StoryCorps, a nonprofit organization committed to recording, sharing, and preserving Americans' stories, will send trained facilitators to record conversations about the museum and its impact on the community.

The National Medal is the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries for extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions. Recipients must demonstrate innovative approaches to public service and community outreach.

Madison Children's Museum has served the community since 1980, guided by its mission to connect children with their families, their communities, and the world beyond through discovery learning and creative play. Through multiple partnerships with local organizations, the museum delivers rich programming focused on the arts, science, history, health, culture, and civic engagement. Museum staff members provide intergenerational programs for older adults with memory loss and are working to expand learning opportunities for children with disabilities. The museum took community service one step further when developing its new building, which opened on the Capitol Square in August 2010, through its *Only Local* initiative. By focusing on hiring local people, using local products, and employing processes that involved the local community, the museum reflects community character, promotes economic development, and inspires civic pride.

"We have been humbled by numerous architectural awards in the past year, but this honor means the most of all because it speaks to the core of our mission: service," said Executive Director Ruth G. Shelly. "People readily recognize us as a great place for kids to learn through play, but we strive

to take service to a deeper level by becoming a resource for parents, educators, and the entire community.”

“Congratulations to Madison Children’s Museum on receiving the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The work you have done is an inspiration to libraries and museums throughout the nation,” said IMLS Director Susan Hildreth. “With innovation, creativity, and a great deal of heart, you have achieved an outstanding level of public service.”

The other institutions that received the IMLS National Medal this year are:

Alachua County Library District, Gainesville, FL
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
Columbus Metropolitan Library, Columbus, OH
EdVenture Children’s Museum, Columbia, SC
Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Collegeville, MN
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA
San José Public Library, San José, CA
Weippe Public Library & Discovery Center, Weippe, ID

Madison Children’s Museum: Madison Children’s Museum (MCM) is an award-winning organization whose hands-on exhibits and programs celebrate and encourage children’s imaginations and the power of play as the cornerstone of learning. For more about the museum, including a fact sheet and detailed exhibit descriptions, please visit <http://www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org/about-mcm/newsroom/>. To download photos for media use, please visit our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/mcmmarketing>.

Institute of Museum & Library Services: IMLS is the primary source of federal funding for museums and libraries. The National Medal for Museum and Library Service was created to highlight the vital role these institutions play in American society. Recipients are selected by the director of IMLS following an open nomination process and based on the recommendations of the National Museum and Library Services Board. For more about IMLS, go to <http://www.imls.gov>.



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