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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children's Museum Receives \$22,000 Helen Bader Foundation Grant for Memory Loss Program

MADISON, Wis. (Tuesday, May 10, 2011) — Madison Children's Museum has received a two-year, \$22,000 grant from the Helen Bader Foundation to continue intergenerational arts programming that connects people with memory loss to their families and community.

In December 2009, the Helen Bader Foundation awarded the museum \$6,500 to pilot a free program for elders with early memory loss and their children, caregivers, and grandchildren, with more than 50 enthusiastic participants throughout 2010-11. Each 90-minute program, offered one Saturday morning per month, featured art looking and art making. The theme changed with each workshop, and concluded with a chance to share the artwork and enjoy refreshments.

The new grant will allow the museum to expand the Sparking Intergenerational Connections program. Museum objectives are to increase outreach, bring together families affected by memory loss, and offer opportunities for community members and elders with memory loss to learn from each other.

It is hoped the project will expand capacity for program development and support existing memory loss programs through staff training while establishing a regular audience of the community affected by memory loss, and reinforcing the museum as an accessible community resource for visitors of all ages and abilities.

"People don't usually think of elders with memory loss as a potential audience for a children's museum, but in fact, it's a perfect fit," says Ruth Shelly, the museum's executive director. "Madison Children's Museum was designed for intergenerational learning. The arts serve as a wonderful bridge not only between children and seniors, but also to memories from long ago. We're grateful to the Helen Bader Foundation for supporting our commitment to access for everyone, including those with cognitive challenges."

The museum is implementing a multifaceted plan for accomplishing the objectives for Sparking Intergenerational Connections by:

- continuing monthly SPARK! Workshops for people with memory loss along with their children and grandchildren
- inviting local Girl Scout troops to participate with elders in the SPARK! Workshops as part of earning a badge
- marketing the workshops at off-campus sites such as senior centers throughout Madison to reach a broader audience
- providing unique volunteer opportunities to individuals with memory loss
- educating staff members on how to work with individuals and families affected by memory loss, including visitors, program participants, and volunteers.

Angela Johnson, the museum's arts coordinator, oversees Sparking Intergenerational Connections and has established relationships with organizations such as the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin and the regional Alzheimer's Association chapter to help the program take root. Conversations with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities have revealed great interest in SPARK! participation, and the museum will hold monthly SPARK! programs at Capitol Lakes Retirement Community in downtown Madison in the upcoming year.

SPARK! programs will be held May 28, June 25, July 30, and August 27 at the museum. All are on Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and registration is required at least 24 hours in advance by calling 608.256.6445, ext. 550. The May, June, and July programs are full.

About the Helen Bader Foundation: The Helen Bader Foundation Inc. strives to be a philanthropic leader in improving the quality of life of the diverse communities in which it works. The foundation issues grants, convenes partners, and shares knowledge to affect emerging issues in key areas. Based in Milwaukee, the foundation has awarded more than \$200 million in grants and \$9 million in Program-Related Investments since it was established in 1991.

About Madison Children’s Museum: Madison Children’s Museum is an award-winning organization which fosters family and community connections, and provides a place where every child can learn through play in an interactive environment. The museum’s hands-on exhibits and programs celebrate and encourage children’s imaginations and the power of play as the cornerstone of learning.

For more about Madison Children’s 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>.

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