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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum Awarded \$86,180 Grant to Develop Science Programming for Ages 8–12

MADISON, Wis. (August 4, 2011) — Madison Children’s Museum has received an \$86,180 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to spend the 2011–12 year developing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs to engage children ages 8 to 12.

The "Building Big Ideas" program intends to extend the age range of the museum’s audience and better serve older elementary school students in the community. The new facility at 100 North Hamilton Street has been successful in attracting early elementary school-age children—families with children ages 5 to 8 make up 30 percent of the museum’s membership—and it’s important to serve these children as they grow older. Additionally, Madison lacks a science center or natural history museum that can offer informal science education to children’s museum “graduates.”

“The IMLS Museums for America grants are highly competitive, and in these tight budget times we’re especially honored to have our proposal selected,” said MCM Executive Director Ruth Shelly. “Now our education offerings can expand as our audience grows older, providing programs with great relevance as we draw on the rich science and technology resources in our community.”

Activities in the yearlong effort will include 1) building community-museum partnerships in informal science; 2) designing, implementing, and evaluating science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs for 8- to 12-year-olds in school field trips, after-school programs, and public formats; and 3) developing an effective strategy for making children and their parents aware of these programs.

The museum has identified local science specialists, education consultants, and interested partner organizations that will form an advisory committee to shape the new programs. The grant will allow the museum to hire a science coordinator who will lead museum education staff through the process of developing STEM programs for field trip, after-school, and public formats.

Children enrolled in Wisconsin Youth Company after-school programs will serve as pilot participants for the new STEM content, and the museum will evaluate baseline knowledge, skills, and attitude toward the chosen content.

Additionally, the museum has been holding listening sessions on what kinds of exhibits and programs to include on its yet-to-be-developed third floor. Based on parent and community input, the third floor likely will be geared toward the same ages 8 to 12 range with STEM exhibits and programs, and results of this grant will help inform that expansion.

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The grant given to Madison Children’s Museum is one of 160 IMLS awards (with 15 awarded to children’s museums) totaling more than \$18.7 million, matched with \$32 million in nonfederal funds for the Museums for America Program Grants. The institute received 481 applications requesting more than \$53.6 million in funds.

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 support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The institute’s mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation and support professional development. For more about IMLS, go to <http://www.ims.gov/>.

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