

Play Works

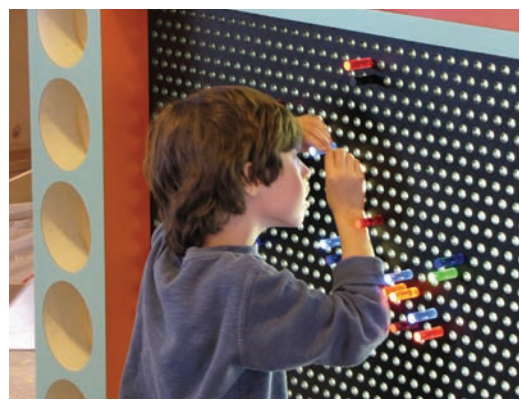
Providence Children's Museum
Campaign for Kids

For kids
For families
For the future



Thanks to the generous support of 530 individuals, businesses and foundations, Providence Children's Museum surpassed its \$1.5 million Play Works Campaign goal, meeting a \$150,000 challenge from the prestigious Kresge Foundation and raising over \$1.8 million for capital projects and the Museum's future.

With the campaign's success, the Museum opened three major new play and learning environments and completed important building restoration.



Play Power

Completed in October 2008, this vibrant learning environment celebrates the power of children's play, engaging kids and grown-ups in open-ended creative activities that vividly illustrate the benefits of self-directed play. Kids discover the awesome power of air by sending colorful balls and scarves winding and spiraling through giant air tubes and conduct a multi-sensory symphony at a one-of-a-kind pipe organ. Visitors explore cause and effect as they construct mazes that send balls rolling down ramps, tracks and tubes. They design patterns and pictures at a light wall that illuminates hundreds of colorful pegs and build with translucent blocks on a glowing light table. Connecting hexagonal foam shapes and noodles, kids invent imaginary worlds and secret spaces in a creative domed play structure.

"This exhibit [Play Power] will help change the perception of why play is important."

- Dr. Robin Meisner, researcher in informal learning

While kids explore playful phenomena, parents and caregivers discover - or rediscover - that play is the root of learning, creativity and problem solving. A resource area for adults features a video that shows how children learn as they play throughout the Museum. The video and related books and take-home materials encourage parents and caregivers to reflect on their own memories of play, to understand the importance of child-directed play, and to notice and appreciate their children's play.

Play Power delivers a deliberate message to parents and caregivers: if you really watch children play, it's clear that important learning is happening.



A Whole New Look

The Museum completed extensive renovations to its historic building in fall 2008. Installing 70 energy-efficient, historically appropriate new windows and repointing the brick façade countered years of weather damage and deterioration and helps the Museum reduce energy consumption and expenses. Interior updates included new wall and floor coverings and enhancements to existing exhibits, all necessary for this important community resource to keep up with growing use - including 167,264 visitors in 2009, a new record by 16 percent!

"I have watched the Museum expand beautifully. Great job!"

- Museum visitor



Underland

An imaginative subterranean adventure featuring a host of natural materials and the work of talented local artists, Underland promotes gross motor exploration and dramatic play by providing children with opportunities to crawl, touch and pretend. Children climb into critters' burrows, navigate a mazelike network of tunnels and make joyful noise as they explore the sounds of a musical sculpture made from local woods. Pretending in an earthy "underground" kitchen, they sit on hand-carved wooden stools and sort through a selection of natural "loose parts." Kids become paleontologists as they use tools to dig and sift in a sand pit and unearth a mastodon skeleton. Root chandeliers, a worm ceiling and artist-created sculptures of native animals and interactive "sand flowers" add to the intrigue and beauty of the environment.

Underland encourages exploration, discovery and a deep appreciation of the natural world.

"How wonderful that kids can have a safe place to get dirty, explore and create. Hooray for childhood!"

- Wendy Nilsson, Friends of Brown Street Park

"THANK YOU for the beautiful new outdoor exhibits you have created. You surpassed our expectations and delivered yet another high-quality, imagination-inspiring, exciting way to play and learn!"

- Museum member

From the Board President

The success of the Play Works Campaign for Kids is due to the tireless work of the campaign leadership - co-chairs Marc and Melissa Crisafulli and Michael and Leslie Sweeney, committee volunteers and dedicated Museum staff. Now Providence Children's Museum is positioned to give more children and their caregivers and families rich opportunities for imaginative open-ended play - inside and outdoors - and for shared, joy-filled learning experiences. The Museum will expand its outreach to underserved audiences and families at risk and will continue to educate parents and caregivers about the ways children learn and about the importance of unstructured play for children's healthy development. We will continue and strengthen our leadership and innovation as children and family advocates and educators. We will continue to learn and grow.

- Jessica Holden Sherwood

The Climber

This artful, safe and challenging climbing sculpture - a colorful two-story high climbing maze that inspires active, physical play - is the first major outdoor installation designed by nationally acclaimed artists and architects Tom and Spencer Luckey. Climbing is necessary for children's physical and problem-solving skill development, and The Climber takes kids high into the sky as they joyfully scramble, wriggle and stretch through an enclosed labyrinth of interconnected undulating platforms. As they excitedly climb past and around each other, slither and slide between the platforms, navigate the space and negotiate their movements, it appears that The Climber is a kinetic sculpture with kids providing the motion.

A new Providence landmark, a dramatic work of public art and an exciting one-of-a-kind climbing adventure, The Climber encourages kids to get outside and play!



- *Wow, I can see the whole city from here!*
- *I tried to go up two times but I was too scared. But then I went back again and I made it all the way to the top!*
- *I've never been so happy!*
- *I'm like a caterpillar on a giant leaf!*

- Kids on The Climber

"With the new play spaces, our well-loved Children's Museum has only gotten better."

- Anisa Raoof, Kidinfo founder and publisher



Many thanks to these Play Works Campaign volunteers for their successful efforts to increase awareness and raise funds:

Campaign Co-chairs Marc and Melissa Crisafulli • Michael and Leslie Sweeney

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Providence Children's Museum is deeply grateful to the following donors for recognizing and supporting the critical importance of children's unstructured play and the Museum's role as an essential community resource.

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