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**PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM AND VARIETY– THE CHILDREN’S
CHARITY HOST 2ND ANNUAL AUTISM AWARENESS NIGHT**

Please Touch Museum, the Children’s Museum of Philadelphia, is teaming up with Variety — The Children’s Charity, for its 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Night, an evening event for families of children with autism. The evening of hands-on, interactive, sensory-filled activities will take place at Please Touch Museum on Saturday, April 2nd from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Children of all ages are welcome.

The event is a partnership between Variety’s Autism Initiative, which provides support for families and caregivers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and Please Touch Museum’s Autism Access Program, which aims to provide families of children with ASD with innovative tools to make a museum visit more comfortable and enjoyable. Families can connect with caregivers and other professionals while exploring and playing in the museum’s exhibits, where accommodations have been made to provide a sensory-friendly experience for all.

“Variety’s Autism Initiative is all about providing children with autism and their families’ opportunities to connect with each other in an uplifting and accepting environment. We are so excited to be partnering with the Please Touch Museum to host this one-of-a-kind event,” said Marissa Tabak, Director of the Autism Resource Center. “As a sibling of a person with autism, I understand how isolated families can feel when they have a child on the spectrum. When your child isn’t able to do the same things as the neighbor’s kids or when they act a little differently than their peers, it is hard to cope. At Variety, we celebrate those differences by bringing families together and letting them know they are not alone. .”

“We strive for Please Touch Museum to be a welcoming learning environment for all children, but we recognize that a busy weekend can be overwhelming to families of children with autism,” said Laura Foster, President & CEO of Please Touch Museum. “We are thrilled to partner with Variety to plan an event that helps to meet the needs of children on the spectrum while also helping parents connect with other parents of children with autism. It is our long-range goal to host these types of events on a regular basis.”

Please Touch Museum’s Autism Access Program provides families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) with innovative tools to make a museum visit more comfortable and enjoyable. The program creates a comprehensive welcoming structure for families of children

with ASD through accessibility tools for families of children with ASD; specialized training focusing on children with ASD and their behavioral patterns; mobile programming enabling children who would otherwise not be able to visit the museum to interact with Please Touch-themed games and toys; special Autism Access evening events for families of children with ASD; and games and toys designed for children with ASD in the Kids Store.

Tickets are required to attend the event and are available at a cost of a \$20 donation per family. One hundred percent of the \$20 donation will go towards the growth of Variety's Autism Initiative. Families must register for the event at www.varietyphila.org. Organizations interested in sponsoring a resource table at the event may contact Marissa Tabak, Variety's Autism Resource Center Director, at marissatabak@varietyphila.org.

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Please Touch Museum® at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park is dedicated to enriching the lives of children by providing learning opportunities through play. Recognized locally and nationally as one of the best children's museums, Please Touch is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. -5 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults and children age one and over. Children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-581-3181, or visit www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

Variety-the Children's Charity of Greater Philadelphia has been serving children with disabilities since 1935. Our mission is to build independence and self-confidence in children and youth with disabilities by engaging them in recreational, social, and educational enrichment activities, while connecting families to resources. Variety provides numerous programs at our Camp & Development Center in Montgomery County, after-school programs in Philadelphia and Delaware, and several special events throughout the Delaware Valley through our Variety at Play program. For more information please call 215-735-0803, or visit www.varietyphila.org.