

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM LAUNCHES 'GROWN-UP TOURS' OF MEMORIAL HALL

Centennial history, art and architecture explored on tours of National Historic Landmark

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Unleash your inner child and learn all about the last major building to remain from Philadelphia's 1876 world's fair on a "Grown Up Tour" of Please Touch Museum! The museum is now offering guided tours for groups or self-guided tours of the museum for grown-ups who want to learn about the unique history of Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park.

"Since opening last October, we've had many adults say they'd love to visit but the children in their lives have long outgrown our museum. With the premiere of our Grown-Up Tours, kids of ALL ages can now enjoy our wonderful museum and learn about the incredible history of this National Historic Landmark," said Nancy Kolb, President & CEO of Please Touch Museum.

The tours are a stroll down memory lane and a walk through the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, the world's fair for which Memorial Hall was built. Enjoy the restored architecture of the landmark building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, while learning about the works of art that were displayed in the galleries at the Centennial and later, when the massive, domed building housed the earliest collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A highlight is a visit to the museum's Centennial Exploration exhibit, which features a scale model, built in 1889, depicting the more than 200 buildings erected for the Centennial.

Fun facts from Memorial Hall's 20th century history as a multi-use recreation center are also part of the tours. Where was the indoor, Olympic-sized swimming pool? Did Memorial Hall really have four jail cells? Where was the basketball court, and when did the Philadelphia Orchestra use it as a recording studio? Grown-ups can also enjoy the museum's art collection, including two indoor murals created by Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program and a 40-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty's Arm and Torch created out of toys, games and other 'found objects,' gathered and assembled by Philadelphia artist Leo Sewell. The sculpture is a life-sized homage to the original Statue of Liberty Arm and Torch, which was displayed at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition as part of a fundraising effort.

Take a spin on the fully restored *Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel*, which originally operated at a Philadelphia amusement park less than 10 blocks from Memorial Hall. The animal menagerie, which dates back to 1908, includes 40 horses, four cats, two pigs, two goats and four rabbits. It is illuminated by 1,296 light bulbs and is surrounded by an exhibit on the history of Woodside Park, which closed in 1955.

Find a beloved toy from your childhood on display in the museum's six exhibit zones. The museum's collection of more than 12,500 toys and games from 1945 to the present is prominently displayed throughout the museum, prompting many "Wow, I had one of those when I was a kid!" moments from grown-up visitors.

The history of being a Philly kid is also a prominent part of the tours. Climb aboard *The Rocket Express*, the kid-sized monorail that carried children above the 8th floor toy department at the famed local John Wanamaker's department store from 1946 to 1984, or revisit the set, costumes and video archive of the children's TV show *Captain Noah and his Magical Ark*, which aired from 1967–1994. During the holidays, see scenes from the *Enchanted Colonial Village*, which was displayed at Lit Brothers' department store on Market Street, from 1962 to 1975.

Self-guided Grown-Up Tours are available seven days a week for \$10 per person. Guided group tours can be scheduled between 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and may be reserved at a cost of \$15 per person by calling the museum at 215-581-3168 or 215-581-3170. Dining options are available in the museum's Please Taste Cafe.

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ABOUT PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM

Please Touch Museum® at Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park, located at 4231 Avenue of the Republic, Philadelphia, PA 19131, is the children's museum of Philadelphia and is dedicated to enriching the lives of children by providing learning opportunities through play. Please Touch features six interactive exhibit zones and a restored 1908 carousel, along with daily activities and theater performances. 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, children age one and over and children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-581-3181, or visit www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.

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