



mission

The mission of the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus is to create extraordinary experiences that champion the wonder and joy of childhood.





Dear friends,

For 50 years, the Children's Museum has been an integral part of the Denver community. The path from our humble beginnings as a traveling exhibition to becoming one of the world's premier children's museums was not without its challenges, and we are so grateful to our early advocates who saw the vision of what this Museum could be.

Today, we continue to serve as a gathering place where families can share moments of connection, and we are committed to ensuring that every family in our community has the opportunity to create, explore and discover with us. Our access programs are vitally important to our mission and show no signs of slowing down. This year alone, we welcomed over 100,000 guests through these programs, which provide free or greatly reduced admission and memberships to families who qualify. We also have new projects on the horizon which we hope will surprise, delight and, of course, inspire wonder and joy.

We are looking forward to the next 50 years, and are excited to challenge ourselves, and the museum industry as a whole, to design and create for the next generation of children and families. As we journey into the future, we are forever grateful for our supporters like you.

With gratitude,

Lisa Wynn, MD, MBA
2023 Board Chair

a year in review



Access is Key

At the Museum, we believe all children and families should have access to hands-on learning experiences that inspire **creativity, wonder and joy**. Because of the rising cost of living in the Denver-metro region and the high need for financially accessible services, several Museum initiatives extend free or greatly reduced admission to families who may not otherwise be able to afford a Museum visit. These include the **SNAP Access Initiative**, which offers significantly discounted admission to families in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and our **Sponsored Admissions and Memberships Program**, which offers free programs and annual family memberships to children in Title I schools.

Through these initiatives and other access and outreach programs, **23% of our audience** (more than **100,000 guests**) experienced the Museum for free or at a greatly reduced cost in FY23.

Dynamic Programs

Included with Museum admission, we offered more than **1,800 educational programs** to our members and guests in FY23. We hosted cooking classes in *The Teaching Kitchen*, where **diverse foods and recipes** were highlighted on the menu. Through our Artist-in-Residence Program, guests worked alongside professional artists **Becky Wareing Steele** and **Calla Michaelides Lokku** to create unique pieces just for the Museum. Outside, we encouraged guests to move, groove and explore nature during Joy Park Adventures.

This fiscal year, we also added a variety of weekly programs designed just for our earliest learners and their caregivers: **Baby Artists** in *The Art Studio*, **Baby Chefs** in *The Teaching Kitchen* and **Nature Babies** in *Joy Park*.



a year in review

Community Celebrations

Our wildly popular community events hosted more than 12,400 people in FY23. Our fall festival, Harvest Hoot, featured a Monster Carnival, spooky crafts and fang-tastic treats from *The Teaching Kitchen*. We rang in Noon Year's Eve with ball drops on the hour and streamers soaring through the air. And we had a Party for Our Planet in honor of Earth Day with activities all about sustainability and our natural world.



Adults Need Fun, Too!

In FY23, our fundraising events raised more than \$250,000. This year, the Museum's annual Birthday Bash was *An Enchanted Evening* with auctions, dancing and delicious, fairytale inspired food and cocktails. And for the first time since 2020, we hosted Joy on Tap, our craft beer festival, with 18 local breweries and 9 caterers serving up brews and childhood-inspired bites to guests who spent the evening enjoying play in the Museum's world-class exhibits.



Snow Days

Snow Days, our seasonal winter experience, returned for a second successful year! New features included a custom diorama with vintage snowmobiles and a snow maze journey, plus guests enjoyed returning favorites like sock-skating, sledding, curling and of course, hot cocoa.



To the Future!

The Museum was excited to begin construction on two new spaces in FY23. *Bloom*, designed for children ages newborn-36 months, will replace the much beloved *Center for the Young Child* and will incorporate the latest research on developmental play for early learners. This beautiful new space will include unique and vibrant art installations from our Exhibits Team as well as six talented Colorado artists. *Gallery Uno* will be the Museum's rotating exhibit space, with experiences designed to be whimsical, irreverent, clever and joyful. *Bloom* will open in October 2023 and *Gallery Uno* is slated to open in summer 2024.



statement of activities

Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus - Fiscal Year 2023

Support and revenues

Gifts & grants - Annual fund ¹	\$	4,882,264
Gifts & grants - Capital fund		930,412
Earned revenue ²		5,656,308
Special events revenue ²		193,063
Investment & misc. income		366,561
Total support and revenues		12,028,608

Expenses

Program		7,369,373
Supporting		2,078,640
Total expenses		9,448,013

Change in net assets

Annual fund		1,650,183
Capital fund		930,412
Total change in net assets		2,580,595

Net assets at beginning of year		24,625,909
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Net assets at end of year	\$	27,206,504
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1. Includes \$1,517,738 in one-time COVID-19 stimulus funding

2. Net of expenses

statement of financial position

Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus - Fiscal Year 2023

Assets

Current assets	\$ 6,972,927
Contributions receivable	525,517
Investments	4,125,400
Property & equipment, net	<u>17,768,953</u>

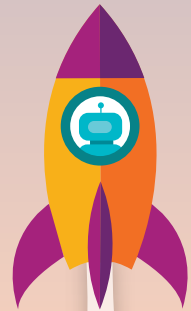
Total assets \$ 29,392,797

Liabilities and net assets

Liabilities	
Current liabilities	\$ 1,048,328
Deferred revenue	<u>1,137,965</u>
Total liabilities	2,186,293

Net assets	
Unrestricted	26,684,302
Temporarily restricted - General	215,069
Temporarily restricted - Capital	<u>307,133</u>
Total net assets	27,206,504

Total liabilities & net assets \$ 29,392,797





Museum Through the Years

Now that we've updated you on fiscal year 2023, we want to take you on a journey through the past 50 years...

Please enjoy this snapshot of the Museum's remarkable history.



Museum for children an exciting concept

H. JOAN MCCOY

A WOMAN HUNG CRIES
crying as she, without being
recognized, announced "I can't
tell you how great I think this
school is!"

She quickly continued, "I'm
so glad to see you here. Are
you going to do a story? Give it
a big write-up. Really do some-
thing spectacular. I know some
people who might be interested
in hearing from a lady like
you, and I'm going to call
them."

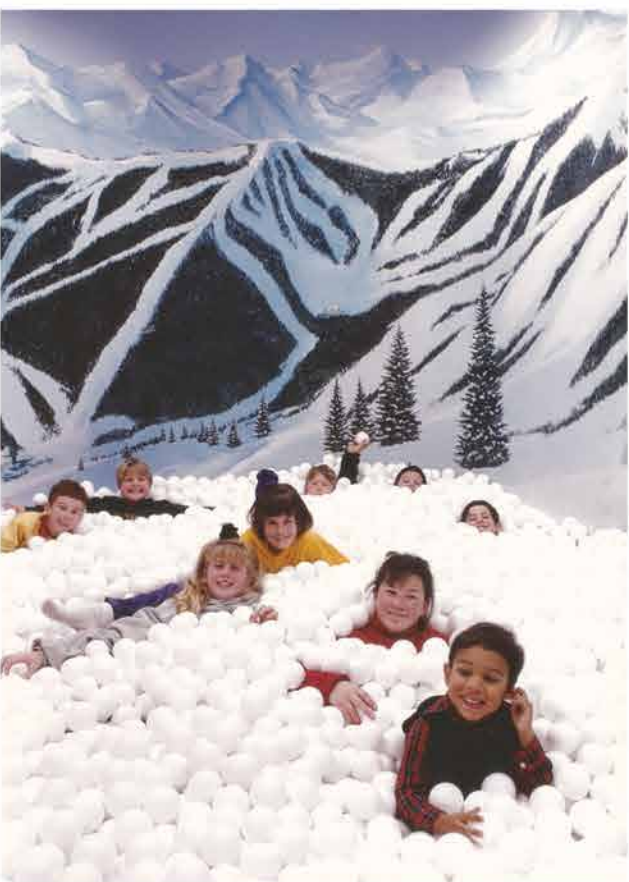
Started a little more than a year ago by a diverse group of Denverians interested in setting up a public cultural institution primarily for children, the museum is currently on its second series of issues around the traditional arts.

THE COLLECTION of hands-on, do-touch exhibits have been designed by a variety of people to help youngsters explore, love fun and learn at the same time. It serves as a stepping stone to the more formal traditional museum.

The principal of this project is to allow children to discover things on their own, although adult volunteers get on hand in case someone needs assistance. The age range to which it has been keyed runs all the way down to three months and



Kevin Copin watches as Paul Holloway works with giant culminate rods during a





1973 - Museum Founded

On May 9, 1973, the Children's Museum of Denver was founded by a group of parents, educators and advocates who sought to create an interactive cultural and educational institution for children and families. At this time, the Museum was completely portable, traveling to libraries, schools and community centers.



1975 - Our First Home

The Museum soon recognized the need for a physical location. After renovating a building on Bannock Street, the Museum opened its doors in January 1975. General admission was free, so everyone could enjoy the Museum!

1980 - Boing! Goes National
Boing!, the Museum-published newspaper written for kids, by kids, launched in November 1978. By 1980, the newspaper was distributing almost 2 million copies to elementary schools across the nation, free of charge. Judy Blume, popular children's author, even contributed a monthly column!

BOING! Newspaper ***Going to Cross U.S.***

BOING!, the newspaper for elementary school-age children published since late 1978 by the Children's Museum of Denver, will be distributed nationally beginning in May, according to Dr. Richard Steckel, the museum's director.

The newspaper's circulation, now about 100,000, will increase to 1,900,000 with its first national edition, Steckel said.

Sponsoring museums in 22 cities in addition to Denver have agreed to distribute the newspaper free, bimonthly, to elementary-school systems within their own cities, he added. National editorial material will be furnished by the newspaper's Denver editorial headquarters at 931 Bannock St. In addition, each sponsoring museum will provide local-interest stories and events to be included in newspapers circulated in its own city.

Among cities which will begin receiving the children's newspaper are Los Angeles; Dallas; Philadelphia; Omaha; Portland, Ore.; El Paso; Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Indianapolis, Steckel said.

He expects the publication costs of **BOING!** will be totally supported by its national advertisers, he added.

Exhibits of the 70s

Moving to a new home allowed the Museum to expand its exhibit offerings. Highlights included *The Cycle of Life*, which tackled the tough subject of death and included a real casket, as well as living and dead plant matter. And to keep things whimsical, the wildly popular *Face Painting Booth* was stocked with all the tools children needed to make their face a masterpiece. But that didn't mean the Museum stopped traveling! *Sensorium* featured a variety of different experiences that were all designed to be brought out into the community and became one of the most profitable aspects of the budding Museum.



1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975



1982 – Meet Nuzz

Nuzz, a cartoon character created by a local artist, becomes the official mascot of the Museum. Nuzz was a regular at Museum events for years, and guests could even take home their own stuffed Nuzz.



1984 – Museum Moves

Within months of opening at the Bannock Street location, the Museum was drawing record numbers from the Denver-metro area and beyond. Planning began for a larger facility, and in 1984 the Museum moved to its current home along the South Platte River.



1989 – SCFD is Founded

The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) was voter-approved and launched in the Denver-metro area. The Children's Museum began receiving funds in the inaugural year, and still benefits from this unique seven-county tax district today.

Exhibits of the 80s

In the 1980s, we invited children and families to explore other cultures in our rotating *Communities* exhibit, and to gain a better understanding and empathy for those with physical disabilities through *Like Me, Like You*. *There's a Monster in My Closet* gave kids a chance to dress up in PJs and conquer their bedtime fears with imaginative play. In *The TV Studio*, guests worked with actual TV equipment to develop and star in their own news program. And at *Jim Short's Health Club*, physical fitness took center stage, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle.



1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985



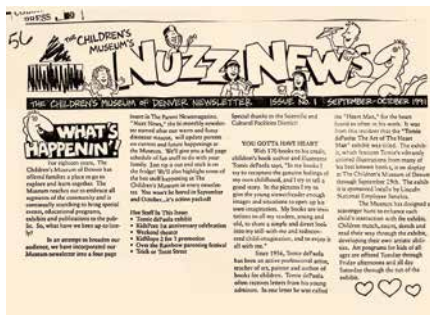
1990 - KidSlope

KidSlope, the 25-foot-high and 120-foot-long plastic ski slope, made its debut at the Museum! Created in partnership with Colorado Ski Country USA, the exhibit was the first of its kind in the nation and was open year-round. It was designed to give children and their families a cost-effective ski experience without ever leaving Denver. Through a special partnership with Denver Public Schools, all fourth graders were given the opportunity to visit the Museum for two free 90-minute lessons.



1998 - 25th Birthday

The Museum celebrated 25 years of service to the community with a month full of special events and activities, including a visit from an elephant!



1991 - Nuzz News

Named after our warm and fuzzy mascot, the Museum launched a bi-monthly newsletter aimed to inform the community about exciting events and exhibits at the Museum. The publication was available as an insert in *The Parent Magazine*, allowing the Museum to expand its reach.



1994 - KidsPort

The Museum opened up *KidsPort* at Stapleton International Airport, the first satellite children's museum in an airport.

1992 - Science Center LAB

The Museum opened the region's only science center specifically for kids, designed for ages 7 - 14.

1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

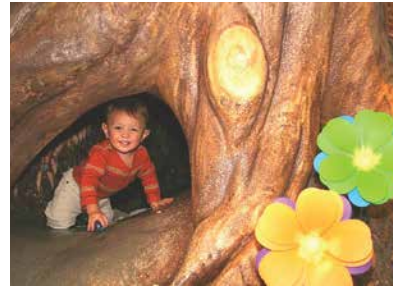


2000 - Center for the Young Child

The *Center for the Young Child* was a 3,700-square-foot exhibit designed to meet the developmental needs of children newborn through age 3 and their caregivers. The Museum utilized the latest research on child development to create an interactive and playful environment, complete with opportunities to develop sensory awareness and language, motor and cognitive skills.

2003 - DPS Science & Literacy Collaborative

The Museum partnered with Denver Public Schools to provide children in Title I schools the opportunity to discover the joys of science and literacy through hands-on learning. In 2006, the Museum received the Environmental Education Award for Excellence for the program, which eventually became the GROW Collaborative and added the Butterfly Pavillion and Denver Botanic Gardens as partner organizations.



2003 - Under My Feet, Over My Head

This “urban backyard” invited visitors to experience all levels of the natural world; underground, on the land and in the sky. It featured oversized plants, animals, insects and microorganisms that can be found in local backyards or parks, allowing children to develop empathy for animals by truly feeling like they were a part of the environment.



2004 - Fire Station No. 1

Featuring a real retired Denver fire truck, the exhibit allowed children to experience the life of a fire fighter through costume play and exploration of the truck. The wildly popular exhibit still lives on at the Museum, now featuring a fire fighter pole for guests to slide down and an interactive experience that allows kids to “put out the fire” in a building.

2014 - Expansion Groundbreaking

The Museum kicked off a transformational expansion project with a special groundbreaking ceremony alongside the community and key stakeholders.



2016 - Artist-in-Residence

The Museum began hosting four local artists each year to hold open studio hours with guests and collaborate with them on a piece for the Museum's collection. The program lives on and continues to fill the Museum with one-of-a-kind art.



2015 - Grand Reopening

After years of fundraising and construction, the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus cut the ribbon on a \$16 million dollar expansion. We more than doubled our public space with two new wings, multiple new exhibits, a world-class outdoor experience area and extra guest amenities.

2015 - SNAP Access Initiative

The Museum launched the SNAP Access Initiative, welcoming all those who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to visit the Museum for just \$1 a person.



2017 - Opening Doors

In response to a growing anti-immigrant sentiment, the Museum collaborated with 10 local artists to build a public art piece consisting of beautifully adorned open doors on the Museum's entry plaza to welcome all families.



2019 - Adventure Forest

The Museum's signature outdoor exhibit, *Adventure Forest*, opened! This 500-foot-long adventure course and immersive art installation provides kids with the chance to challenge themselves and experience art in a whole new way.



2021 - Snow Days

This seasonal experience features all the best winter activities, including sock skating, sledding on real snow, an imaginative ice fishing game, a snow maze and of course, hot cocoa and toasty fireplaces. *Snow Days* allowed guests to get outdoors and practice greater social distancing at a time when the pandemic was still affecting many in our community.



2018 - National Medal

The Museum was awarded the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities.



2023 - 50th Anniversary

We celebrated 50 years of wonder and joy alongside key community leaders, including Governor Jared Polis, who declared May 9 *Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus Day*! We also honored the founders, stakeholders, board members and staff who came before us with a special alumni event hosted on May 24.

special events through the years

The Children's Museum has hosted numerous events in our 50 years, but these celebrations have been some of our biggest hits.



Fall Fun Festivities

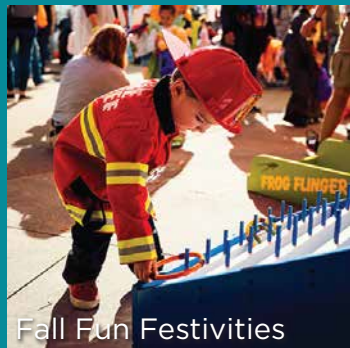
Halloween, and of course, dressing up, have always been important traditions at the Children's Museum. In the 1970s, the Haunted House featured a mad scientist in his laboratory, a spooky garden and the Dark Slimy Passage filled with gooey green creatures, bats and cobwebs. Over the years, the event evolved into Trick or Treat Street, which debuted in 1979, and showcased a variety of wild and whimsical treat houses stocked with goodies. In 2022, Harvest Hoot got its start, featuring a Monster Carnival, fall-themed décor, crafts, treats from *The Teaching Kitchen*, music and a whole lot of fun.

Noon Year's Eve

Launched in 1996 as the first New Year's Eve celebration specifically for kids in Denver, Noon Year's Eve is a tradition that continues to this day. Families can experience the glitz and glam of NYE in Times Square, all before bedtime! The event features multiple ball drops, confetti and streamers, music, themed crafts and more. Though the event was originally known and loved for its bubble wrap fireworks, it now takes on a whole other level of wintry fun in our seasonal outdoor experience, *Snow Days*.



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Fall Fun Festivities



Noon Year's Eve



Noon Year's Eve



Earth Day Celebrations

Earth Day Celebrations

The Museum has long been a leader in teaching children how to care for our planet. In 2017, we began our annual Earth Day Celebration which included activities about gardening, composting, recycling and even baking with a solar oven. In 2019, the event was re-branded to Party for Our Planet in order to feature not just conservation, but topics ranging from geology and Earth's history to diverse cultures around the world.

Hop, Skip & a Jump Start Family 5k

From 2007 – 2019, the Museum hosted Hop, Skip & a Jump Start. This stroller-friendly 5K started on the Children's Museum plaza and followed the South Platte River. The event also included Mini Meets, like the Toddler Trot and Infant Crawl, allowing children of all ages to participate and raise funds to support the Museum.

Bunny Trail EggVenture

The Museum's annual springtime festival, hosted from 1998 – 2017, invited guests to visit different "eggsploration stations," sample tasty treats, meet animal friends and listen to StoryTimes with the Big Bunny.

Craft Beer Festival

Launched in 2018 as Ales, Apps & Barrels of Fun, the fundraiser was rebranded in 2023 to Joy on Tap. Held in February, this 21+ event invites adults in our community to experience all the wonder and joy of the Children's Museum while discovering beers from local breweries and snacking on tasty bites from some of Denver's top caterers.

Annual Gala

As the Museum's largest fundraiser, the Birthday Bash has served as a night for our supporters to gather, bid on auction items, mix & mingle over drinks and hors d'oeuvres, and to celebrate and support the Museum's important work. Each year, the gala's theme changes, paving the way for wildly creative décor with equally inspired cocktails and food. Funds from the event support the Museum's access programs, exhibit development, educational programming and operations, and would not be possible without a team of amazing committee volunteers.



Hop, Skip & a Jump Start



Bunny Trail
EggVenture



Craft Beer Festival



Annual Gala



Annual Gala

special thanks to our volunteers

Our incredible volunteers dedicate their time and energy to make our programs, events and operations successful. In FY23, 165 individuals volunteered 1,598 hours to support our mission. **THANK YOU!**

49th Bash Committee

Thank you to our amazing committee for making the 49th Birthday Bash such a success!

Event Chairs

Jen Kilgore & Megan Whelan

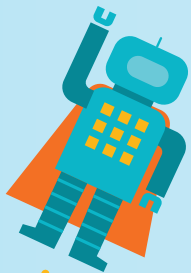
Committee Chairs

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Kali Hanford
Julia Lazure
Sarah Mohapp
Kelly Warren
Kate Winn
Ella Yeager

Event Committee

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\$1,000 to \$2,499

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Community Active Living Coalition
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Duree Family Charitable Fund
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Megan Scremin: CEO & President, Special Olympics Colorado
Betsy Wagner: Early Childhood Advocate
Elaine Y. Weng, MD, MS: Mountain Radiation Oncology Consultants
Elizabeth Whillock: VP of Human Resources, Ovintiv

Thank you, SCFD!



Unique to our amazing state, the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) makes field trips, educational programs, exhibits and many free days possible. SCFD is a voter-approved tax of 1 penny on every \$10 spent in the 7-county metro area, directly supporting over 300 arts, science, historical and cultural organizations. The ability of the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus to fulfill our mission to create extraordinary experiences that champion the wonder and joy of childhood is made possible in part by the citizens of the SCFD.

