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MEXICO: FESTIVAL OF TOYS OPENS AT CHICAGO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Museum-wide experience celebrates play and childhood; honors Chicago's Mexican community

Chicago, IL—September 13, 2010—Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) opened its newest exhibit, *Mexico: Festival of Toys* today. Sponsored by MetLife Foundation, this museum-wide experience opens during the kickoff of Hispanic Heritage Month and runs through March 13, 2011.

Originated by the Papalote Children's Museum in Mexico City, with support from Maseca and Distroller, *Mexico: Festival of Toys* features more than 600 toys, including handmade dolls, puppets, marionettes, traditional puzzles, games, musical instruments, and wood carved and papier-mâché animals. The artifacts, dating from 1920 to the present, reflect the cultures and traditions of Mexico.

"Toys are universal, bridging cultures and generations," said Jennifer Farrington, President and CEO, Chicago Children's Museum. "*Mexico: Festival of Toys* offers an incredible hands-on play experience for children and families. It's a wonderful way for parents and grandparents to explore, with their children, the vibrant culture of Mexico through its toys."

"*Mexico: Festival of Toys* is the best way to celebrate the talent and spirit of Mexican culture and connect with the universal language of toys through sharing this beautiful and unique collection of 600 folk toys with children of all ages," said Marinela Servitje de Lerdo de Tejada, Executive Director of Papalote Children's Museum.

Taking inspiration from the Papalote collection, CCM has developed several hands-on, interactive experiences where children and families can make and play with toys.

Features include:

- A *DIY Toy Workshop* where visitors have all the tools, materials and inspiration needed to become a toymaker and create a vehicle, doll or puppet. Children are encouraged to capture their experience by posing with their toy in a photo booth, then writing about it.
- A *Wheel Track* that allows visitors to test how fast their vehicle can go.
- A *Puppet Theater* where kids can design their own puppet and put on a puppet show.
- *Rattle-rama*—a dedicated space for infants and toddlers to explore the toys of early childhood—rattles!

- A *Small Worlds* station where children can create dwellings for tiny toys in stacked cubes or on a rolling landscape using miniature items like tables and chairs, and non-traditional items like tree bark, straw and various wooden shapes.
- A seek-and-find activity encourages families to explore the Papalote collection together.

The exhibit was timed to open in participation of *Mexico 2010*—the city-wide celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mexican Independence and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. CCM joins other cultural institutions and Mexican-American neighborhood organizations in this celebration that includes 86 events.

“We are delighted to witness two excellent museums that are committed to children’s education through entertainment, working together to present *Mexico: Festival of Toys*,” said Manuel Rodriguez-Arriaga, Consul General of Mexico. “We thank them both for their meaningful participation with this unique exhibition in the yearlong commemorations of Mexico 2010 in Chicago.”

About Chicago Children’s Museum

The mission of Chicago Children's Museum is to create a community where play and learning connect. CCM is the only cultural institution in the city dedicated to young children and the important adults in their lives. Playful experiences—including over fifteen interactive exhibits and programming spaces—tap into how kids learn and engage them at an early age so they develop a lifelong love of learning.

Located at Navy Pier at 700 East Grand Avenue, CCM is the final stop for CTA buses #29, #65, #66 and #124. For more information, please visit www.chicagochildrensmuseum.org.

About Papalote Museo del Niño

Papalote Museo del Niño opened its doors in 1993 to offer children and their families spaces of free learning on science, technology and art. More than 34 million visitors have experienced learning through play in our flagship museum in Mexico City, traveling museums and exhibitions, and outreach programs. Since 1994, Papalote has been consulting to create more than 30 different national and international museum projects. Bosque de Chapultepec Segunda Sección México D.F. 1 800 327 27 27 www.papalote.org.mx

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