



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF ST. JOHNS PARTNERS WITH DAYTONA MUSEUM OF ARTS AND SCIENCES TO OPEN IN DOWNTOWN ST. AUGUSTINE

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. (November 30, 2011) – The Children's Museum of St. Johns (CMSJ) has partnered with the Daytona Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach (MOAS) to acquire the Dow Museum of Historic Houses site in downtown St. Augustine.

On November 15, CMSJ entered into a six-month lease- to-purchase agreement for the Dow property, which is currently owned and operated by MOAS. Formerly known as the Old St. Augustine Village, the property is a collection of 9 historic houses at the intersection of St. George, Bridge and Cordova Streets.

"After an intensive site search, the Dow Museum meets all of our criteria to establish an amazing children's museum for our community," said Ben Platt, President of the Children's Museum. "Our goal in purchasing this property will be the continued preservation and appreciation of these historic structures, while providing a new educational and cultural family resource in downtown St. Augustine. We are pleased to work with the Daytona Museum of Arts & Sciences, a respected institution known for its strong commitment to supporting children's education."

During the six-month lease period, CMSJ will utilize 246 St. George Street as office and meeting space, with the remainder of the Dow Museum property open to the public and operated by MOAS. After exercising thorough due diligence on the property and compiling detailed budgets for renovation and exhibits, CMSJ will have the option to purchase the property at the conclusion of the lease.

"With 16,000-20,000 square feet, a historic downtown location and a unique layout of both indoor and outdoor exhibit space, we know this property is going to allow us to create a world-class children's museum in the nation's oldest city," said Susan Connor, CMSJ Executive Director and past President of the Board. "We owe a debt of gratitude to our supporters throughout the community, who have worked with us for nearly five years to bring us to this point."

Deborah B. Allen, Interim Executive Director of MOAS, responded "We are delighted to partner with the Children's Museum of St. Johns and, as the home of the Charles and Linda Williams Children's Museum, to serve as a mentor to CMSJ as it works to establish a place where children and their families can go to learn together through hands-on exhibits and experiences."

The Children's Museum of St. Johns was founded in February 2007 by a passionate group of parents, professionals and engaged citizens and is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization incorporated in the state of Florida. The planned museum will use fun, interactive exhibits to teach children about the unique historical, cultural and environmental aspects of Northeast Florida.

More information on The Children's Museum of St. Johns is available at ExploreCMSJ.org.

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Please direct media inquiries to Susan Connor, Executive Director of the Children's Museum of St. Johns, at (904) 540-4001.