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**Press
Release**

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For Immediate Release

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN ANNOUNCES OPENING OF "AMERICA TO ZANZIBAR: MUSLIM CULTURES NEAR AND FAR"

**New Interactive Exhibit Set to Open Feb. 13, 2016 Explores Diversity of Muslim
Cultures Worldwide for a Family Audience**

*"America to Zanzibar" is the Fourth in a Series of Major Cultural Exhibitions by the
Children's Museum as Part of its Commitment to Help Prepare Children for Today's
Global Society*

New York, NY – Feb. 10, 2016 – The Children's Museum of Manhattan today announced the opening of *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*, a groundbreaking, new interactive exhibit for children and families that explores the diversity of Muslim cultures in New York City, the U.S. and abroad. The multimedia exhibit and programming at the Children's Museum (212 West 83rd Street) showcases the cultural expressions of various Muslim communities around the world through age-appropriate experiences with art, architecture, travel, trade, design and more. It will open Feb. 13 and remain open for at least a year.

The 3,000-square-foot exhibit is the fourth in the museum's Global Cultural Exhibition Series, following exhibits about the cultures of Ancient Greece, China and Japan. The series celebrates the diversity of cultural expression across our interdependent world. An important part of the museum's ongoing commitment to nurture the next generation of global citizens, the series offers family-friendly, hands-on experiences designed to engage the senses and appeal to a wide variety of learning styles.

"Exposure to cultural differences at a young age, especially through the arts and everyday activities, helps children develop a more nuanced respect for diversity as they age," said Andrew Ackerman, the Children's Museum's executive director. "This is vitally important in today's world, particularly in New York, one of the most diverse cities in the world."

"New York City's Muslim residents make up a vital part of our city's rich and diverse communities and we're proud to have this exhibit in one of our city's important cultural resources," said Bill de Blasio, mayor of New York City. "With *America to Zanzibar*, children will have the chance to learn about Muslim cultures in an engaging and thoughtful way. We only grow stronger when we embrace and celebrate the multitude of cultural backgrounds that make up New York City."

“I am looking forward to bringing my entire family to the Children’s Museum of Manhattan to see *America to Zanzibar*,” said New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer. “We live in the most diverse city in the world – this exhibit builds upon our unique multicultural landscape, highlights how Muslim communities and cultures have enriched New York City and the world, and teaches our kids the importance of embracing diversity. I want to thank the Children’s Museum for curating this important exhibit for our city’s kids.”

“*America to Zanzibar* offers a compelling introduction to the great variety of Muslim visual art, architecture, and cultural experiences in the United States and globally,” said Bro Adams, the National Endowment for the Humanities chairman. “Guided by leading humanities scholars, this new exhibit reflects the Children’s Museum of Manhattan’s ongoing commitment to exploring international history and culture, and exemplifies NEH’s support for educational exhibits on world cultures.”

The exhibit, designed for children ages 2-10 and their families, consists of five major sections: a Global Marketplace, Trade Routes area, Courtyard area, Architecture area and an American Home area.

The Global Marketplace features stalls from around the world brimming with sounds, smells and goods, where children can pretend to buy and sell spices from Egypt, ceramics from Turkey and rugs from Morocco. They can also weigh their fresh catch at the Zanzibari fish market, smell Indonesian fruits, serve Tajik tea, and design outfits inspired by the West African tailors on 116th Street.

Visitors learn about the exchange of culture across continents and centuries in the Trade Routes area. Children can climb aboard a replica of a multi-level Indian Ocean *dhow* (boat) and experiment with navigation techniques, travel to various ports, learn to bargain, and unload goods from around the world. Below deck, they can experience a multisensory exploration of the *dhow*’s cargo. Children can also decorate a Pakistani truck, then hop in the cab and embark on a pretend trip through the Western Himalayas. They can also climb on top of a life-size camel and journey across the desert.

The Architecture area virtually transports visitors into a series of magnificent, international mosque architectural styles. Breathtaking panoramic images are projected onto a 21-foot curved screen and explore the wide range of aesthetic styles from Asia to Africa and to America. Families can also try their hand at drafting their own structures, complete with domes and arches, while gaining insight into architectural traditions from around the Muslim world.

The Courtyard features warm light flooding through a lattice roof. Families can explore key elements of design, water and geometric patterns that are central to a traditional Muslim courtyard. At a central fountain, visitors can sample verses from renowned Muslim poets and share how they would make the world a better place—one drop at a time. Children are also encouraged to make music with digital instruments, and compete in a guessing game with authentic objects that illustrate the significance of geometric patterns in Muslim cultures.

The American Home area is a contemporary living room filled with objects donated by American Muslims. Visitors explore the wide variety of American and New York City Muslims’ stories through their unique objects, clothing, art and books. They can also learn to write “My name is…” in 21 of the languages spoken by New York Muslims, view artistic works by

emerging local American Muslim artists, and follow the history of Muslims in the U.S. through a visual timeline.

America to Zanzibar will also feature a selection of art and artifacts from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's renowned collection of Islamic art.

A wide range of workshops, programs, live performances and festivals will take place throughout the exhibit's run. Participation is free with admission.

Over the past five years, the Children's Museum has worked with an international network of advisors from academia, research, civil society, government and the arts in support of *America to Zanzibar*.

Funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, MetLife Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Open Society Foundations, The Violet Jabara Charitable Trust, El-Hibri Foundation, The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Goldman Sachs Gives, National Endowment for the Arts, Maison de l'Artisan in Morocco, the Children's Museum of Manhattan's Board of Directors and scores of individuals.

Citywide program funding has been provided by the New York City Council under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

Following its run at the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the exhibit will travel to other cultural institutions around the country.

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About Children's Museum of Manhattan

The Children's Museum of Manhattan is the vibrant home to 350,000 visitors a year from all segments of the NYC community and tourists from around the world. The museum's educational mission in early childhood education, creativity, health and culture thrives within our home on 83rd Street and in dozens of communities across the city as well as through national initiatives with leading authorities and government agencies. Child development is at the core of the museum's values and mission and our vision is to be the bridge that connects children and adults in the community, school and home in order to prepare our children for the global world in which they live. For details regarding all of the Children's Museum programs and initiatives, please visit www.cmom.org.