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New Children's Museum of Manhattan to Open in 2028

Laurie M. Tisch has donated \$50 million to the \$300 million capital campaign for a new location on Central Park West.



Rendering of the Children's Museum of Manhattan on West 96th Street at Central Park West, designed by the architects FXCollaborative and exhibit designers THG, will feature immersive exhibits dedicated to science and the environment. via CMOM



By **Robin Pogrebin**

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The Children's Museum of Manhattan on Tuesday announced that the philanthropist Laurie M. Tisch, its founding board chair, has donated a total of \$50 million to the institution's \$300 million capital campaign for its new home at Central Park West and 96th Street, which is expected to open in 2028.

"It's the most I've given to one particular institution," said Tisch, who also serves on the boards of the Whitney, Lincoln Center, Juilliard and the Aspen Institute.

Adding that she cares about "access and opportunity," Tisch said that she was particularly motivated by the museum's programs like the one that enables Rikers Island prisoners to spend time with their children at the museum, a partnership with the Robin Hood anti-poverty foundation.

In 2017, Tisch gave the museum \$10 million and a loan of \$20 million [to help purchase the building, a century-old church](#). She followed that with \$10 million gifts in 2022 and this year, as well as a recent conversion of the loan to a donation, the museum said.

So far \$200 million has been raised for the capital campaign, which the museum said included the \$45 million cost of construction, the building purchase, the exhibit design and fabrication, and an operating endowment and operating reserve.



The Children's Museum of Manhattan, currently on West 83rd Street, will move into a century-old church at Central Park West and 96th Street. Benjamin Norman for The New York Times

Laurie Cumbo, the city's commissioner of cultural affairs, said in a statement that the new building "will mark a new chapter for the museum and give them the capacity to engage more young people from across the city."

[Jackie and Mike Bezos](#), philanthropists in early learning, have also donated \$30 million and the city has allocated \$46.1 million, the museum announced on Tuesday. The cosmetics magnate Leonard A. Lauder made an undisclosed gift in 2021.

Since its founding in 1973, the museum on West 83rd Street has become a staple of the Upper West Side, particularly for parents looking to entertain their children on cold or rainy days. The museum has also partnered with city shelters, Head Start programs, settlement houses, hospitals and the Department of Correction to reach a broader audience.

The new 80,000-square-foot-building will more than double the museum's visitor capacity and expand the age range of the children it serves, extending from birth to 10 instead of to 8 years old. Designed by the architects FXCollaborative and exhibit designers THG, the new space will feature immersive exhibits dedicated to subjects like science and the environment; hands-on experiences like painting, writing, cooking and coding; and amenities such as a cafe, museum store and performance space.

On the fourth floor, which wraps around the top of the building's barrel vault — and will be lined with floor-to-ceiling circular windows — will be "an interactive, large-scale water and sound experience," the museum said.

The "historic structure will be transformed into a dynamic seven-story magical castle on the park for all our city's children," Dava Schub, the museum's chief executive and its director, said in a statement.

The building will also feature a terrace around the base of the neo-Classical spire overlooking Central Park.

"The architects, they took me up to the rooftop and one of them said, 'You have no idea how many people in New York have never seen this view,'" Tisch recalled. "Whoever thinks of views as something not everybody gets? So I helped purchase the building."

Robin Pogrebin, who has been a reporter for The Times for nearly 30 years, covers arts and culture in California. [More about Robin Pogrebin](#)