



**CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN LAUNCHES FINAL PHASE OF \$300 MILLION CAMPAIGN  
FOR A NEW HOME OVERLOOKING CENTRAL PARK,  
WITH FOUNDING BOARD CHAIR LAURIE M. TISCH ANNOUNCING A TOTAL \$50 MILLION GIFT**

**Elected Officials Joined Museum Leadership to  
Celebrate Campaign Milestone and  
Unveiled New Details of the Transformation of the Soaring, Historic Building**

*Expected to Open in 2028 with Dynamic New Exhibits and Experiences,  
Building Will More than Double Museum's Visitor Capacity and  
Expand CMOM's Impact as a National Leader in Early Learning and Development*



**NEW YORK, NY, October 1, 2024** — The Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) today launched the final phase of the \$300 million campaign for its iconic new home on New York's Upper West Side and unveiled new details of the project, as Museum leadership and trustees gathered in celebration with public officials, donors, architects, designers and members of New York City's most important constituency—its children. During the ceremony, CMOM announced that Founding Board Chair Laurie M. Tisch has donated a total of \$50 million to the campaign for the new CMOM, which is expected to open in 2028.

Tisch's donation now joins significant support from the City of New York, which has allocated \$46.1 million to the project to date, with funding from the New York City Mayor's Office, City Council, and the Office of the Manhattan Borough President.

A primary resource for expert early learning, CMOM has welcomed millions of children and their caregivers to its current location on West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street since its founding in 1973. With today's ceremony, CMOM enters a new phase in transforming the century-old church it has acquired overlooking Central Park at 361 Central Park West. Once renovated, the soaring, 80,000 square foot building, with its dramatic barrel-vaulted sanctuary and towering windows admitting light from all sides, will give CMOM more than twice the visitor capacity of its current home for children and families throughout the entire city. The building will house dynamic new exhibitions and experiences while enabling CMOM to expand the age range of the children it serves, extending from birth to 10 years old.

Dava Schub, CMOM Chief Executive Officer and Museum Director, said, "This historic structure will be transformed into a dynamic seven-story magical castle on the park for all our City's children, as CMOM invests in setting every child up to thrive. Over the years, CMOM has brought research-based learning experiences to millions of children at our museum and to children where they live and learn, in partnership with City shelters, Head Start programs, settlement houses, hospitals, the Department of Correction and beyond. With our new home, we will be able to do even more to nourish the whole child through play, artmaking and exploration."

Laurie M. Tisch said, "I am thrilled to announce that our *96 & WOW* campaign has exceeded all expectations, with \$200 million now raised toward our \$300 million goal as enthusiasm spreads for the new CMOM. My personal contribution, donated as a capstone to decades of philanthropy dedicated to education, is a total \$50 million gift, which I give in the belief that this is the single most important project for the future of New York. We know, from study after study, that the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning and the social, emotional and cognitive development of a child is laid in the earliest years. In fact, 90% of a child's brain development happens before they turn five. Too many children in our city enter school without the foundational skills and experiences they need to thrive in the classroom. The new CMOM will be committed to giving parents and caregivers tools to help set up children for success in school, in life and in their communities."

"Every child deserves access to amazing cultural institutions, and since 1973 the Children's Museum of Manhattan has provided young New Yorkers and their families with remarkable cultural programming that helps their imaginations to grow and their creativity to flourish," said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo. "This state-of-the-art new home will mark a new chapter for the museum and give them the capacity to engage more young people from across the city with the incredible benefits of the arts. The city is proud of its major, \$46 million investment in this new project, one of a number of new children's museums we're supporting across the city, and we applaud Laurie Tisch and the other generous donors who have joined us in supporting this remarkable institution."

CMOM also announced support for the campaign from the Bezos Family Foundation, which has provided a generous \$30 million gift.

Jackie and Mike Bezos, co-founders of the Foundation, leading philanthropists in early learning and longtime supporters of CMOM, said, “We’ve seen firsthand when visiting with our grandchildren how CMOM is a vibrant living laboratory of learning. CMOM’s unwavering dedication to reaching New York City’s most underserved families is a beacon of hope that sparks learning and connection for children and caregivers alike. For years, they’ve worked to meet families where they are – from homeless shelters and libraries to serving those involved with the justice system. Now, with the creation of this extraordinary new museum, CMOM’s physical home will finally mirror the transformative magic that has always resided within its programming. This isn’t just an investment in a building, but in helping build a stronger future for us all.”

On the occasion of reaching this milestone and launching 96 & WOW, CMOM is inviting its community to take part in the celebration by offering free admission on October 5 and 6. This very special Amazon Free Weekend will provide free access all weekend to a full line-up of special programs anticipating the future Museum.

### **Inside the New CMOM**

With architects FXCollaborative and exhibit designers THG working to realize a vision developed by CMOM in collaboration with its council of national early learning advisors, the new Museum will transform the cultural landscape of New York City with children at the center. The design, from the building’s lower level to the base of the spire, will be conceived as a journey of adventure and discovery, offering immersive learning environments enlivened throughout by engaging, interactive large-scale artworks designed by and for children.



Matthew Messinger, Chair of the CMOM Board of Directors, said, “Today is an historic moment for CMOM and the entire city, as we proceed to remake this magnificent landmarked building on the corner of 96th Street and Central Park West into a new museum for all our City’s children. Originally designed

by Carrère and Hastings, this building is among the firm's finest landmarks in New York, including the main branch of the New York Public Library, the Frick Collection and Grand Army Plaza. In this new home, CMOM will unlock the power of inspiring architecture and design to help transform New York City one child at a time. The thoughtful ways in which we will repurpose this landmark, and return it to public use, will be a powerful lesson in sustainability for our children and for our city. With half a century of expertise as our foundation, a great architecture and design team as our collaborators, and tremendous support from our partners in city and state government, we are building the ideal museum to serve New York now and for generations to come."

"As we bring new life to a neglected landmark, we balance the desire to honor, expose, and converse with this historic building to create something new," said Sylvia Smith, FXCollaborative Partner Emerita. "The Children's Museum of Manhattan will come alive through the intermixing of the new and vital with the historic and venerated."

Each floor of the new CMOM will offer dynamic, stimulating, research-backed learning experiences to nurture the social, emotional and cognitive development of children.

The ground-floor lobby is envisioned as a bustling hub of activity and information, spacious enough to provide a smooth and efficient welcome to all CMOM's visitors. Amenities will include a seamless stroller check, a café with healthy offerings and a premier museum store featuring a curated selection of unique toys, books and artmaking activities for children of all ages.

On the museum's second floor, children will be able to travel the globe through hands-on experiences and immersive technologies. Organized as an invitation to explore our *Wide Wild World*, exhibits dedicated to exploration, science and the environment will aid the development of inquiry-based skills that cultivate analytic thinking, resilience, communication and curiosity. Immersive experiences will invite children to discover an array of ecosystems from rainforests to savannahs to undersea reefs, inspiring sensitivity and care for the natural world. Each experience will be designed to meet children where they are and grow with them.

The third floor—the museum's great hall, with a 22-foot-high ceiling—will be devoted to the theme of *What Will I Create Today?* This space will offer children the opportunity to paint, write, cook and design, all access points to developing self-awareness, social awareness and compassion. The largest exhibit will be a multi-level creativity lab: a fully accessible Maker Space for a range of STEAM experiences including painting, clay making, science experimentation, coding and more. Through hands-on cooking in the Cocina Kitchen, young chefs will discover the fundamentals of nutrition, learn the impact of various foods on the brain and body, work with measurements, observe chemical reactions and explore world cultures through traditional cuisine. An interactive reading-and-writing lab will open avenues to language development, literacy and creativity.

The fourth floor will wrap around the top of the building's barrel vault and be lined with a series of floor-to-ceiling circular windows, intimately scaled spaces that encourage children to sit, read and wonder. An interactive, large-scale water and sound experience at the center of the floor will allow children to compose, perform and conduct their own music with instruments from cultures around the world, and two adjacent galleries running the length of the building will offer flexible spaces for educator-led programs on music and science.

Above the office level, the sixth floor will feature CMOM's permanent performance space with professional-level lighting and acoustics and flexible seating designed with the youngest audiences in mind. In the museum's new theater, CMOM will build on decades-long relationships with more than 50 arts institutions such as American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Hispanico, Lincoln Center, New Victory Theater, and Alvin Ailey to introduce children and families of every background to the best of arts in New York City.

CMOM will offer specialized daily enrichment classes in arts, science, music and movement throughout its new facility.

At the summit of the building, a terrace around the base of the neo-classical spire, high above Central Park, children and their families will experience the splendor of NYC as never before.

#

**Contact:**

Sara Beth Joren

Polskin Arts

sarabeth.joren@finnpartners.com