

From: Children's Museum of Manhattan

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For Immediate Release

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN ANNOUNCES OPENING OF "HELLO FROM JAPAN!" EXHIBIT

**Interactive Exhibit Exploring Tokyo's Vibrant Culture Will Run from Jan.
20, to May 14, 2017**

New York, NY – Jan. 10, 2017 – Back by popular demand, the Children's Museum of Manhattan's *Hello from Japan!* exhibit is returning to the Children's Museum (212 West 83rd Street) beginning Jan. 20 through May 14, 2017. The interactive traveling exhibit, which garnered great attention and praise during its 2015 run at the museum, transports families to two distinct areas of Tokyo that exist side by side: one serene and exquisite, the other, too cute for words.

Located in the museum's Lower Level Gallery, the 1,500-square-foot exhibit invites families to explore an immersive, child-sized Tokyo streetscape and Shinto park. Visitors learn how time-honored Japanese traditions co-exist with the contemporary culture of *kawaii*-inspired graphics and products, characterized by round figures, vibrant colors and a whimsical, cute aesthetic.

Based upon the colorful and bustling streets in the modern Harajuku district, *Kawaii Central* explores contemporary Japanese culture by evoking the friendly feel of Japanese *Kawaii*, an aesthetic and sensibility which emerged in the 1970s among Japanese schoolchildren and has now permeated cultures worldwide. Families are introduced to Japan's unique culture through child-friendly characters and graphics. Visitors express their own individuality and simultaneously gain insight into modern Japanese society as they create *kawaii* outfits, design playful mascots for their families, serve up a seasonal Japanese meal, practice writing Japanese characters, and sign along to Japanese children's songs in a karaoke booth.

A bridge at the end of the streetscape leads from the contemporary urban setting into a more tranquil Shinto shrine park environment. The park explores the traditional, nature-based practices and beliefs of Shinto, an indigenous Japanese religion. Families learn about the appreciation of diverse and powerful elements of nature. They are also encouraged to appreciate their own local parks, trees and natural elements after they explore the shrine area's crawl-through forest, make a wish at a large Wishing Tree, get their fortune told and encounter a few of Japan's *kami* spirits.

Hello from Japan! was the third in the museum's Global Cultural Exhibition Series, following exhibits about the cultures of Ancient Greece and China, and preceding an exhibit which explores diversity of Muslim cultures worldwide for a family audience and is currently on

display on the museum's first floor. The series celebrates the diversity of cultural expression across our interdependent world. An important part of the museum's ongoing commitment to nurturing 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.

"We believe learning about others helps us to learn about ourselves. This is true for both adults and children," said Andrew Ackerman, the Children's Museum's executive director. "An ability to appreciate cultural similarities and differences is more important now than ever. Our Global Cultural Exhibition Series, which includes Hello from Japan!, lets families have fun and make new discoveries together."

A full range of complementary workshops and programs will occur throughout the exhibit's run.

Hello from Japan is part of the Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series, funded by The Freeman Foundation and administered by the Association of Children's Museums.

For more information about the exhibit, please visit www.cmom.org

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About Children's Museum of Manhattan

The Children's Museum of Manhattan – a citywide resource for children, families and educators – works to ensure children thrive at home, at school and in the community. Based on West 83rd Street, with over 350,000 visitors annually, the Museum creates hands-on learning environments, programs, and curricula through an alchemy of fun, research and museum science. In addition to its commitment to delight and educate visitors, the Museum offers resources and strategies for parents, caregivers, and educators to help children become lifelong learners. Thousands more New Yorkers also benefit from the Museum's offering through its outreach programs at schools, Head Start centers, shelters, libraries and hospitals. For more information, please visit www.cmom.org.