



***Museum of Discovery and Science Announces New Early Childhood Exhibit
Leading to First Steps in Science: Discovery Spot***

The current Discovery Center exhibit closed beginning January 2 to clear the path for the brand-new Discovery Spot, designed for children ages 0-6.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (January 9, 2023) – A new early childhood experience is ripening at the [Museum of Discovery & Science](#) (MODS). The *Discovery Center* exhibit gallery at MODS has closed as of January 2 and is reopening this summer as the *Discovery Spot* presented by JM Family Enterprises.

“Our newest permanent exhibit gallery is blooming at MODS! The *Discovery Spot* will encourage hands-on creative play that is so important to the cognitive development of our children,” said **Joseph P. Cox, president and CEO of MODS**. “Early childhood education is in our DNA, dating back to our beginning in 1976 as the Discovery Center. The new *Discovery Spot* will allow our community's youngest scientists to take their very first steps in science.”

Let's grow together through playful learning! In the *Discovery Spot* children ages 0-6 will be able to splash, climb, tinker and explore. This gallery encourages our youngest guests to make exciting discoveries through experiences in the freshly reimaged and beloved *Citrus Grove*, *Ocean to Air* and *Everglades* areas.

The *Discovery Center*, which was installed as a permanent exhibit space at the Museum when it opened in 1992, has welcomed more than 12 million guests from every state and countless countries over the past three decades. The new *Discovery Spot* will encourage playful exploration and STEM experiences leading to lifelong learning for all families and will cover 4,000 square feet of Museum space.

Designed from the ground up to support the needs of all families, the *Discovery Spot* offers numerous opportunities for adult-child collaboration in zones packed with one-of-a-kind experiences. Exciting learning opportunities include *Sketch & Release* where

guests can bring Florida native fish and sharks to life by digitally painting their chosen species and then releasing them into a digital ocean. They can ascend the *Cloud Climber* above the exhibit floor and walk the wings of a biplane suspended from the exhibit ceiling. In the *Juicing Factory*, the swirling water in the washing station, brightly colored juicing tubes and whirling machinery pay homage to the Museum's *Great Gravity Clock* standing proud in the *Atrium*.

During the construction phase, MODS will provide continuity of early childhood experiences through its Sprouting STEM Early Childhood Learning Lab powered by PNC Grow Up Great, located on the second floor of the Museum, as well as exciting exhibits *Wild Kratts: Creature Power!* from January 20 - May 7, followed by *Expedition: Dinosaur*, May 19 - September 4, in the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Traveling Exhibit Gallery.

MODS extends its gratitude to the donors, who have generously contributed six- and seven-figure gifts towards making the *Discovery Spot* possible: JM Family Enterprises; Emil Buehler Perpetual Trust; The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation; PNC Bank; A.D. Henderson Foundation; Publix Super Markets Charities; Miniaci Family; Katy & Jon Ferrando; Florida Panthers Foundation and The Setnor Byer Family Fund. To date, we have raised more than \$5.3 million towards our goal of \$6.25 million.

According to **Josh Bass, VP of innovation for JM Family Enterprises** and MODS board member, "JM Family has been supporting the Museum of Discovery and Science since 1993 because we feel that what they do is a valuable part of our community." Bass also adds that "promoting education is one of JM Family's strategic areas of giving, and this new STEM exhibit will increase the opportunities for discovery and interactive experiences for the Museum's guests of all ages."

Cressman Bronson, PNC Bank's regional president for Southeast Florida, notes that "through PNC's ongoing support of the Museum of Discovery and Science, we're able to strengthen and enrich the lives of some of our youngest children and their families with this new, educational and creative exhibit. We're proud to sponsor this interactive early childhood exhibit that encourages their youngest guests to make exciting STEM discoveries at the enhanced *Citrus Grove*, *Ocean to Air* and *Everglades* areas."

Monica Menahem, A.D. Henderson Foundation says, "The Foundation has a sole focus of supporting young children, their families, and early educators, and has been a supporter of the Museum since its inception in 1976. We are thrilled to be part of this collaborative community effort as the Museum of Discovery and Science expands opportunities for early childhood learning. The *Discovery Spot* will offer young children and their caregivers a safe, welcoming and fun place to learn, grow and explore."

For **Kelly Williams-Puccio, executive director of Publix Charities**, states “Publix Charities is proud to support MODS’ new *Discovery Spot* early childhood exhibit. STEM activities support play, wonder and curiosity in young children, and encourages problem-solving using inquiry and investigation. MODS has always been a leader in STEM education and we are happy to be able to help in their important work.”

Donors **Jon and Katy Ferrando** said, “as long-term supporters of the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Discovery and Science, we are pleased to contribute towards the NEW *Discovery Spot* exhibit, which will include an iconic Orange Picking Spot! This exciting addition will carry forward the incredible legacy of MODS, captivating young learners in our community and engaging them in science and discovery in a fun, interactive manner.”

Anita Byer, The Setnor Byer Family Fund sums up their desire to give saying, “we believe, wholeheartedly, that character, humanity, success and the ability for impact is fostered by education”, adding “we can think of no better way to ensure this end in the minds of the young than to support MODS in its effort to deliver opportunity and knowledge through quality, creative and engaging learning.”

Discovery Spot Renderings can be downloaded [here](#).

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About the Museum of Discovery and Science:

Founded in 1976 as the Discovery Center, today the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS) is at the forefront of science education, innovation and exploration. MODS connects people to inspiring science, providing STEM education and cultural experiences for 450,000+ visitors annually in the 150,000 sq. ft. facility. MODS is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) for three decades (only 3% of science museums are accredited for excellence and leadership in the field). In the past year, MODS has added to that distinction by being named *Broward’s Hub for Resilience Education* by the Board of the Community Foundation of Broward, selected by the LEGO Foundation as one of only 12 museums nationwide to join the *Playful Learning Museum Network* and was selected as one of 15 finalists for the prestigious *2022 IMLS National Medal for Museum Service*.

The Museum celebrates diversity and welcomes visitors from all walks of life. The Museum hours are Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. MODS is located downtown at 401 SW Second Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

33312. For more information about the Museum, please visit mods.org or call 954.467.MODS (6637).

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Kip Hunter Marketing | 954.765.1329

Rachel Sudack // rachel@kiphuntermarketing.com

Museum of Discovery and Science | 954.713.0901

Andi Fuentes // andrea.fuentes@mods.org