



## Press Release

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### DuPage Children's Museum Trims Its Operations to Keep the Focus on Children

(Naperville, IL) – DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville announced today that it has made a series of difficult decisions to reduce its operating expenses to adjust for the realities of the current economy.

The Museum is cutting an additional 15 percent of its annual operating budget by cutting operating expenses, eliminating several staff positions, reducing salaries and shortening its mid-week hours.

"We are making very difficult decisions in our annual budget to ensure that we can focus on the larger issue of resolving our long-term bonds," said Susan Broad, executive director.

The Museum issued the bonds in 2001 to purchase its current Naperville location and build out its educational facility. Despite paying down its original \$13.3 million in bonds by \$3.9 million, the Museum has been faced with escalating fees and interest payments and a difficult economy that threatens reduced sources of income for all nonprofits.

"We need to ensure that young families can continue to benefit from the critical early childhood learning experiences fostered at our Museum. Investing in children's minds is not a luxury. It must be a priority especially during recessionary times," said Broad.

DuPage Children's Museum attracts approximately 330,000 visitors a year and is one of the most popular regional attractions that contribute significantly to Naperville's "kid-friendly" status. In fact, the Museum ranks as one of the top 12 most-visited cultural attractions in the nine-county Chicago region, according to Crain's Chicago Business.

The Museum's administrative costs have been among the lowest of the top cultural institutions in the area, and it has raised enough of its own funding through earned income and donations each of the last four years to operate in the black.

Historically 40 percent of the Museum's annual operating budget has been raised through donations and grants. The remaining 60 percent is generated from earned income including admissions, memberships and program fees.

In November 2008 the Museum trimmed an initial \$200,000 of its fiscal year 2008-09 operating budget. It also acted on several strategies to increase revenue, including extending its hours on Friday evenings to provide visitors with greater access after work and school hours.

“In November, we were careful to make budgetary cuts that did not directly affect the average visitor’s experience. With the budget cuts we have been forced to make now as fiscally-responsible measures, visitors will still have a quality experience but the changes will be more noticeable,” said Broad.

In addition to closing early on Mondays, the Museum also will close at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, except on national and school holidays when Museum attendance typically increases. Families planning a visit to the Museum should confirm hours of operation by checking the Web site at [www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org](http://www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org).

Broad’s salary as executive director has been reduced by 18 percent, while all Museum staff members who are paid more than minimum wage have undergone a 10 percent reduction in salary. Four full-time positions as well as two part-time positions have been eliminated. Additional adjustments have been made to reduce staffing hours in specific areas including Museum floor coverage during visitor hours.

The current round of cost-cutting measures, combined with those made in November, will reduce expenses in the current fiscal year by \$800,000.

“These adjustments will ease the burden of balancing our budget in the current fiscal year, but the long-term debt issue still must be dealt with right now. We need additional help from local, county and/or state governments to resolve this issue so we can return our focus to inspiring children to think creatively in math, science and the arts,” Broad said.

“Investing in our mission now means that we can protect the very educational experiences that contribute to the health and well-being of families especially during tough times,” she added.

DuPage Children’s Museum aims to combat the national epidemic of underachievement in math, science and art by offering entertaining, hands-on exhibits and programs proven to boost creative thinking, problem solving and social growth in all children.

The Museum has received national, regional and local awards for the quality of its programming and educational outreach services, including those to underprivileged children—particularly important in hard economic times.

Area residents who wish to join the Museum’s grassroots efforts to advocate for a viable solution that enables it to remain in Naperville for the long term should visit [www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org](http://www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org) to register as a DuPage Children’s Museum CHAMPION. To date, more than 2,400 people have signed up as CHAMPIONS. For information, call (630) 637-8000.

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