



For Immediate Release

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**Dr. William A. Petit, Jr. to be Honored at The Children's Museum Annual Celebration
with Youth Champion Award**
Museum to Unveil Proposed Plans for the UConn Campus Project

WEST HARTFORD, CT (October 26, 2016) – The Children's Museum is pleased to announce it will honor two extraordinary individuals at this year's annual *Visions* dinner event on November 16, 2016. In addition, The Children's Museum will also unveil its proposed plan and design for the UConn campus property.

The Museum's **Youth Champion Award** honors an exemplary individual and accomplished leader, advocate and champion for children in our communities. The award will be presented to Dr. William A. Petit, Jr., recognizing the outstanding work he does for the education of young people, especially women in sciences. Dr. Petit is President and Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Petit Family Foundation which has granted nearly \$1.5 million to CT and regional charitable programs and projects since 2008. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Statewide Council of the Connecticut State Medical Society, is Chairman of their Charitable Trust and is a member of the Hartford County Medical Association Board of Directors. Dr. Petit is also the Chairman of Hayley's Hope and Michaela's Miracle Memorial MS Fund which has granted over \$450,000 for MS programs and scholarships in the state. Dr. Petit has received numerous honors and awards for both his professional and charitable work throughout the region, including the Interval House's *Breakfast with Champions Award*.

The **Rising Star Award** will honor an exceptional youth inspired by significant involvement with The Children's Museum and/or Roaring Brook Nature Center. This year's award will be presented to Isaac Rosenthal, whose first visit to Roaring Brook Nature Center was as a camper when he was 4 years old. As his fascination with the natural world grew, so did the number of hours he spent at the Nature Center, moving up the ranks from volunteer to head teacher. Isaac also began spending more and more time at The Children's Museum, where he was involved in many aspects of the Museum, from animal care to exhibit construction to outreach. His passion for the education and the environment continued through college, where he received a degree in biology from Northeastern University. Now a graduate student, he is applying citizen science to investigate how coastal development is affecting nearby ecosystems; a joining of outreach and science that echoes his years spent at the Roaring Brook Nature Center and The Children's Museum.

During the celebration dinner The Children's Museum will also unveil its proposed plan for the University of Connecticut West Hartford site that the town is in the process of purchasing. Dr. Michael Werle, Executive Director of the Museum, will provide a sneak peek of the design concept with new renderings that detail the potential for a family-friendly park setting including the Museum. The Children's Museum's proposal intends to create both a quality of life and economic development element for the site, the town and state.

The Visions keynote speaker will be Walter Nakonechny, Associate Director of Education, at The Jackson Laboratory. Mr. Nakonechny will speak about connecting people with science to educate, inform, and accelerate discovery as well as the essential role The Children's Museum played in his professional path. Mr. Nakonechny is a Connecticut scientist and educator. At Jackson Laboratory he coordinates many programs for diverse learner groups, including Jackson Labs renowned Summer Student Program, and develops partnerships to implement genomics education at the high school and college levels. Most recently he formed the Genomics Workforce Consortium, a statewide Jackson Labs program to train Connecticut's bioscience workforce.

Visions is a celebration of the future, our children and our community. It will take place on Wednesday, November 16 from 5:30 – 8:30pm at the Hartford Golf Club. Emcees for the evening will be Dennis House and Kara Sundlun from *WFSB Channel 3*.

Tickets for Visions can be purchased at www.thechildrensmuseumct.org/support/visions.

For more information on Visions please contact Amy Kosciukiewicz at (860) 231-2830 ext. 480 or akosciukiewicz@thechildrensmuseumct.org.

The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center are the region's premiere destinations for exploration and education. Home to over 100 live animals, the Museum features hands-on exhibits, out-of-this-world digital planetarium shows, and programs for young children and families.

The Children's Museum and Preschool are located at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford and Roaring Brook Nature Center is located at 70 Gracey Road in Canton. More information is available at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

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