

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Mississippi Children's Museum to Celebrate the Opening of a New *Pollinator's Playground* Addition to Support Native Pollinator Species and Enhance Outdoor Learning at MCM

Jackson, Miss. (May 19, 2017)—On June 22, 2017 at 10:00 AM on the C Spire Plaza, the Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) will officially open its newest outdoor addition—the Pollinator's Playground. The Garden Club of Jackson, who had the original vision for this space, generously provided the initial funding for this project. A grant from the Mapp Family Foundation made it possible to complete its construction. This garden not only adds beautiful outdoor space to the museum, but as it grows, will help sustain native pollinator species while also serving as a living, learning laboratory.

“The Garden Club of Jackson is pleased to support the installation of a living exhibit of a sustainable pollinator garden utilizing native plants which support our local ecosystems. This will provide opportunities for education about conservation of our world. The plaza area of MCM also will be more welcoming with the addition of these plants and flowers,” said Cheryl Welch, President of the Garden Club of Jackson.

The garden was designed by Landscape Architect, Rob Anders, with Native Habitats of Jackson, MS and installed by Max Spears with Exterior Design and Landscape Company, Inc. of McComb, MS. It features native perennials many of which are pass-along plants given by the members of the Garden Club of Jackson, ornamental grasses, shrubs and a thicket of sassafras trees. Sassafras, in addition to being an important host plant for several species of butterflies, is the only tree which has three different kinds of leaves on one plant—an oval shape, a mitten shape, and a glove shape—which makes it fascinating.

“We created the design to be both playful and immersive for the visitor. Children remember their experiences, the sites, the smells, the textures, so it is important to emphasize those elements,” said Rob Anders. “Really, what I think is most important is that the garden help children and adults realize that nature is not something that is ‘out there,’ but is everywhere...including in our cities.”

Pollinators which include insects like bees and butterflies along with birds, bats and other animals are vitally important not only for maintaining the health of local ecosystems but also for agriculture. Honey bees pollinate approximately 80% of the fruit, vegetable and seed crops cultivated in the United States.

“With the addition of the Pollinator's Playground, this free public exhibit will allow visitors to be immersed in a unique experience from the moment they come onto our grounds. We are excited to have the opportunity to use this space to connect with the natural elements of our campus and to provide an interactive learning opportunity for all children around the benefits of pollinators,” said Susan Garrard, MCM President and CEO.

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About the Mississippi Children’s Museum

The Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering in its visitors a passion for lifelong learning, improving the health and well-being of Mississippi children, and instilling a sense of state pride in all Mississippi residents. The mission of MCM is to provide unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge and learning in all children. The goal of MCM is to empower and inspire all our state’s children, regardless of their social, educational or economic background, to discover their potential by tapping their curiosity and creativity. The more than 40,000 square foot museum is designed around five primary initiatives, with correlating exhibits, programs and outreach efforts. These initiatives include: Literacy, STEM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts and Mississippi Heritage—the keys to helping our children mature into healthy and productive adult learners. To learn more about MCM visit www.mschildrensmuseum.org.