



## Rocky's House: The Traveling Exhibit Visits the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian

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### MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM - MERIDIAN

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Meridian, Miss. (Mar. 21, 2022) – *Rocky's House: The Traveling Exhibit* is coming to the Mississippi Children's Museum – Meridian (MCM-Meridian) on **Tuesday, March 22, 2022**.

The beloved Talk From the Start mascot and literacy advocate, *Rocky the Reader*, is touring the state of Mississippi in a brand-new traveling exhibit called *Rocky's House*, with its next stop in Meridian, MS.

*Rocky's House* is an extension of the [Talk From the Start](#) advocacy campaign which is a partnership between the Mississippi Children's Museum and Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI). It was formed to raise awareness that talking to and with children from birth is essential to learning and literary success.

*Rocky's House* will guide Mississippi's youngest learners and their caregivers through three primary methods of early language and literacy development: playing, talking, and reading. Visitors will learn about these methods and have a chance to play them into practice at MCM-Meridian from **Tuesday, March 22 to Sunday, April 3** before *Rocky's House* travels to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the Delta.

Rocky's statewide tour will share the campaign's message "We all play a part, talk from the start," which encourages parents, caregivers, educators, and community supporters to talk to and with young children. Schools and organizations statewide can request to book *Rocky's House* by visiting [www.talkfromthestart.org](http://www.talkfromthestart.org).

In conjunction with *Rocky's House* opening at MCM-Meridian, a new weekly program called *ABC Come Play with Me* will begin on Tuesday, March 22 at 10am. This program will promote the development of early literacy and language skills in infants and toddlers through song, read alouds, and hands-on activities.

The Talk from the Start Campaign and its companion project, the *Rocky's House* traveling exhibit, have been made possible through funding by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. For more information, visit [www.talkfromthestart.org](http://www.talkfromthestart.org) or email [talkfromthestart@msreads.org](mailto:talkfromthestart@msreads.org).

### **About the Mississippi Children’s Museum - Meridian**

The Mississippi Children’s Museum - Meridian (MCM – Meridian) is the East Mississippi satellite campus of the statewide Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM)—a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that creates unparalleled experiences to inspire excellence and a lifelong joy of learning. MCM-Meridian is a 25,000-square-foot facility with exhibit space designed around three primary initiatives: Literacy, STEAM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts, and Mississippi History woven throughout all galleries. Outdoors is a 25,000-square-foot exhibit gallery that allows children a safe and magical space to explore and enrich the learning experience. The museum’s exhibits, programs, and outreach opportunities provide engaging, explorative, hands-on educational activities for children of all ages. MCM – Meridian is a strategic part of the statewide Mississippi Children’s Museum which is dedicated to inspiring all of Mississippi’s children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential. To learn more about MCM – Meridian, visit [www.mcmmeridian.org](http://www.mcmmeridian.org).

### **About the Barksdale Reading Institute**

The Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI) was founded in 2000 by Jim Barksdale with a commitment of \$100 million dollars. The mission of BRI, based on the Science of Reading, is to improve the overall quality of literacy education in Mississippi so that all children are reading on grade level by the end of third grade. This goal is achieved through strategic literacy initiatives including school readiness programming, professional development for educators and school leaders, improving the quality of education for undergraduate teachers before they enter the field, forming key partnerships with educational organizations, and influencing educational public policy in Mississippi. BRI is headquartered in Oxford and Jackson, MS and works with educators throughout the state to dramatically improve the quality of reading education in Mississippi. For more information visit [www.msreads.org](http://www.msreads.org).

### **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal innovator and entrepreneur Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special attention is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).