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**MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ANNOUNCES PROGRAM EXPANSION;  
CELEBRATES BEING NAMED ONE OF THE TOP THREE CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS  
IN THE COUNTRY**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – The Mississippi Children's Museum announced an expansion of their educational and workforce development program today, one month after being named one of the top three children's museums in the United States by USA Today. The LIFT is the museum's educational arm and focuses on statewide outreach, workforce development, STEAM, and literacy training for teachers as well as provides educational opportunities for students.

“The Mississippi Children's Museum is a gift to not only Jackson, but the entire state of Mississippi,” said Michael L. Cormack, Jr., Jackson Public Schools Deputy Superintendent. “We are so proud that they are getting the national recognition they deserve. Thousands of visitors benefit from the museum's innovative exhibitions and features each year, and as this expansion shows, their work is not done. We are proud to have a group so focused on the success and development of the children and educators of our state.”

In February, USA Today named the Mississippi Children's Museum the third best children's museum in the country as part of their 2024 Reader's Choice Travel Awards. Twenty museums were nominated by a panel and then the nominees were voted on by museum supporters and USA Today readers.

Mississippi Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann said, “We are so proud to be the home of the Mississippi Children's Museum and want to continue to support the work they do to invest in the children of our state.”

“I'm proud to host my friends from the Mississippi Children's Museum here at the State Capitol today,” said State House Representative Shanda Yates, District 64. “You won't find a group of people who care more about the next generation of Mississippians. They are constantly looking for ways to help our children learn, grow, and develop, which creates a better future for all of us.”

“We are truly honored to be named one of the best children’s museums in the country,” said Susan Garrard, Mississippi Children’s Museum President. “Not only are we dedicated to making sure our museum remains a top tourist destination, but we are expanding our focus on education, outreach and workforce development. The Mississippi Children’s Museum is an incredible place for children to play, but it is so much more than that. We are continuing to grow and invest in the future generations of Mississippians by providing top-of-the line educational opportunities for students and teachers alike through The LIFT program.”

The museum revealed plans for the expansion including two new features: The City Lab and The Nest. The City Lab will be The Lift’s interactive STEAM exhibit gallery used to provide hands-on training in digital technologies and computer science for both educators and students. This gallery will demonstrate how children’s passions and interests can be turned into fulfilling careers that positively and sustainably impact the future of our state. Meanwhile, The Nest will serve as an inspirational educator resource center for current and upcoming educators both from urban and rural school districts, supported by access to high-quality instructional materials through in-person and digital networking. In The Nest, educators will have access to a library of lesson plans, STEAM experiments, and other valuable resources to aid their classroom teaching.

The Mississippi Children’s Museum is also expanding its after-school program, which currently serves more than 130 students in Jackson and Meridian. The museum provides a safe and inspirational after-school environment with enriching programs spanning architecture, coding, art, and more.

“Through programs like The LIFT, we are doing more than providing activities for children to do in the here and now– we are setting them up to be successful adults,” said Garrard. “We have a chance to make a lasting impact on the lives of Mississippians for decades to come, and we are excited to begin the next chapter of this important work.”

To learn more about The LIFT, visit [theliftms.org](http://theliftms.org).

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

*The Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission of creating unparalleled experiences to inspire excellence and a lifelong joy of learning in all children. MCM’s two award-winning museums in Jackson and Meridian collectively offer over 100,000-square feet of exhibits and educational programming designed around five primary initiatives, Literacy, STEAM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts, and Mississippi Heritage – the keys to helping our children mature into healthy and productive adult learners. MCM offers exceptional resources for children, families, and educators through The LIFT, traveling exhibits and programs, community outreach, Launch into Learning afterschool program, professional development for educators, and innovative literacy and language development programs: Talk from the Start and Reach Out and Read. MCM is honored to have received an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal, the Mississippi Tourism Association Governor’s*

*Award for Travel Attraction of the Year, and USA Today's 10Best Travel Award for Best Children's Museum. To learn more about MCM visit [mschildrensmuseum.org](http://mschildrensmuseum.org).*