

CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM
INDIANAPOLIS®

100 YEARS of SPARKING
memories
& wonder
& dreams

PRESENTED BY



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Looking Back

Here's how The Children's Museum has evolved into the place you and your family love.

1925

On Dec. 6, Mary Stewart Carey and four others found The Children's Museum in a carriage house at the Propylaeum.

1926

Shortly thereafter, the museum moves to the shelter house at Garfield Park.

1927

With Garfield Park not working out, the museum relocates to Carey's residence at 1150 North Meridian, its home for 19 years.

1933

The Children's Museum Guild forms with eight members.

1946

Running out of room in the Carey home, the museum acquires the Parry house at 30th and Meridian streets in an auction.

1961-1962

The museum triples its space by adding a new gallery called the Hall of Man and purchasing a commercial garage/apartment building and converting part of it to Transportation Hall.

1964

The first Haunted House, an idea proposed by Guild president Dessie Partenheimer, opens. With 26,000 visitors over 10 days, it raises \$13,200 for the museum.

1968

Crowds line Meridian Street to watch the Reuben Wells, perched upon a flatbed truck, make its way to the museum from Altoona, Pennsylvania.

1971

The Children's Museum becomes the first museum in Indianapolis—and among the first two dozen in the U.S.—to be accredited by the then named American Association of Museums.

1973

Ground breaks on a new, dedicated museum building at 30th and Meridian. At 225,000 square feet, it will be the largest children's museum in the world—a distinction still held today, though the building is now 482,950 square feet.

1975

Then-museum director Mildred Compton tracks down the animals that once made up the old Broad Ripple Park Carousel. The critters are refurbished, a Wurlitzer organ is secured, and the Carousel is installed on the top level by lowering it through the roof.

1976

First Lady Betty Ford is among the first visitors to the new, state-of-the-art building. Among its many features are a conservation laboratory, a 350-seat theater, a separate entrance for school groups, and a replica limestone cave.

1977

Attendance tops 1 million for the first time.

1979

Mascot Rex is introduced—with a look perhaps better suited for the Haunted House.

1980

After three years of preparations, the Mastodon debuts on Level 4. The 12,500-year-old skeleton was unearthed on a farm in Greenfield, Indiana.

1981

Playscape® opens.

1987

The Carousel is designated a National Historic Landmark.

1988

The museum expands again, this time adding the Sunburst Atrium (originally the Welcome Center), the Water Clock, and two special-exhibit galleries.

1989

The SpaceQuest Planetarium (now called the Schaefer Planetarium) opens.

1996

ScienceWorks and the CineDome (now part of Dinosphere®) open. The museum welcomes Calder's Art: A Circus of Creativity, the first major fine arts exhibit hosted by a children's museum.

1998

All Aboard! begins its journey.

2000

The museum opens infoZone. A treehouse, the Lilly Playhouse, and other whimsies are added to Carousel Wishes and Dreams.

2004

Dinosphere: Now You're in Their World® opens with a roar. Access Pass, a program that offers discounted visits to Indiana cultural institutions, launches.

2006

Fireworks of Glass bursts forth.

2007

The Power of Children: Making a Difference® opens, and the museum receives the Max Simon Comic Book Collection.

2009

Take Me There®: Egypt opens. Visitors play dress up in Barbie™: The Fashion Experience, the museum's first Barbie exhibit. The Skywalk, brachiosaurs "Seymour" and "Riad" peeking in, and the Welcome Center are new too.



2011

The museum partners with National Geographic to open Treasures of the Earth.

2013

Thirty-two years after its debut, Playscape is reinvented with a more family-focused environment and activities based on the latest early-learning research.

2016

Beyond Spaceship Earth blasts off, and ScienceWorks is renovated to feature more immersive experiences. The Mid-North Promise Program begins.

2017

Museum paleontologists kick off Mission Jurassic in the Jurassic Mile®, excavating nearly 500 fossils over the next five years.

2018

The biggest expansion in 40 years brings the indoor-outdoor Riley Children's Health Sports Legends Experience®. The museum also takes over the collection of the National Art Museum of Sport.

2021

The Power of Children expands with the addition of Malala Yousafzai's story. Museum My Way begins.

2022

The reimagined Dinosphere opens, showcasing finds from the Jurassic Mile in three immersive sections: Creatures of the Cretaceous®, Monsters of the Mesozoic Seas™, and Giants of the Jurassic™.

2025

The museum turns 100!



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Once Upon a Time

Ever wish you could experience the museum as it was in the past? You're in luck! Here's a snapshot of exhibits and events from our 10th, 30th, 50th, 70th, and 90th years.

In 1935, you could . . .

- Wander 35 rooms of the Carey House "filled with material from other lands, other days and the world of nature," as described in a newsletter.
- Sign up for the sixth season of Prairie Treks out West, led by local teacher Hillis Howie.
- View new acquisitions that included two mounted owls, a loon, and a red-tailed hawk; a framed hair wreath; and a clock from the former Marion County Courthouse.
- Hear from Major H. Weir Cook presenting "The Airplane and How it Grew" as part of a Saturday-morning educational series. Sound familiar? Indianapolis' airport terminal bears his name.
- Also listen to Dr. F. Tulley Hallam on "Adventures in Stamp Collecting" and archaeologist Glenn A. Black in "Let's Dig a Mound."



- See two life-size dolls sent from the International Children's Society of Japan to stimulate friendship between Japanese and American children.
- Listen to Marie Peary Stafford, daughter of famous Arctic explorer Admiral Robert E. Peary, recount her childhood (but only if you were a junior member).



In 1955, you could . . .

- Join a nature walk in the spring and fall at various locations, including Garfield and Riverside Parks.
- Bring interesting items you found outdoors and display them for other children to see.
- Watch puppet demonstrations and explore a new fossil exhibit.
- Sign up for Reptiles and Amphibians, Drawing and Painting, and Tree Finders, all Girl Scout badge programs.
- Learn what kids played around the world during employee-led Games of All Lands sessions.
- Attend the Guild's annual dance, called The Animal Fair, at Woodstock Country Club. A dinner plate was \$3.75.
- Receive an invitation created by second- and third-graders for a 30th anniversary museum open house.



In 1975, you could . . .

- Learn how to needlepoint, arrange dried flowers, and make cornhusk dolls in a "skills seminar" hosted by the Guild.
- Watch as the Reuben Wells moved into its home in the museum's new building. Later in 1975, the Carousel was installed on the fourth floor.



- Spend 50 cents to go through the Haunted House, Skeletons in Our Closets. Proceeds supported a new prehistory exhibit.
- See firefighting equipment and vehicles being restored in the museum's engine shed.
- Sign up for the new junior anthropologists club.
- Join the Guild for a 1920s-themed bash at the Indianapolis Athletic Club in celebration of the museum's 50th anniversary.
- Attend the museum's public 50th birthday party with magicians, gymnasts, acrobats, and Murat Shrine clowns teaching kids how to apply clown makeup.



In 1995, you could . . .

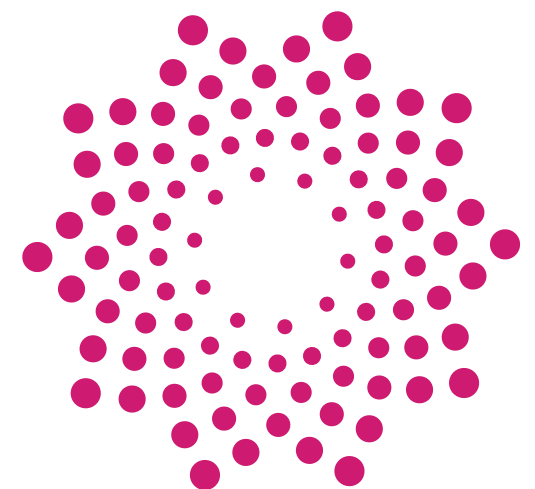
- Travel to the center of Earth with Mrs. Frizzle in a Magic School Bus exhibit.
- Watch laser shows in the SpaceQuest Planetarium.
- See construction begin on the CineDome.
- Do a double take from the Victorian mansion façade covering the museum exterior for the Haunted House.
- Look skyward as Elvis Presley look-alikes parachuted into the museum parking lot in celebration of Flight: Where Adventures Take Off!



- Board a train from the State Fairgrounds to Ritchey Woods in Fishers for springtime hiking and storytelling, and then again in the fall for a haunted ride.
- Enjoy Beauty and the Beast, Winnie-the-Pooh, Rumpelstiltskin, and Cinderella in the Lilly Theater.

In 2015, you could . . .

- Brave the perilous plank and creepy kraken in the Pirate's Revenge Haunted House. Shiver me timbers!
- Support the Extraordinary Transformations capital campaign, which set the stage for additions such as the Riley Children's Health Sports Legends Experience®.
- Explore the museum as a grown-up (without kids) in the second year of the After Dark series.
- Raise a glass to the museum's birthday at Museum before Midnight: 90 Years of Fun!
- Play in Transformers: Robots in Disguise™, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles™: Secrets of the Sewer™, and Hot Wheels™: Race to Win™.
- Marvel at fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other fascinating artifacts in National Geographic Sacred Journeys.



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Go Figures!

Not to subtract any attention from **100**, but these numbers are an equally important part of the museum's equation.

Founded in **1925**, we are the **4th** oldest children's museum in the world, behind Brooklyn (founded 1899), Boston (1915), and Detroit (1917)

1 live alligator offered to the museum in 1925

25 cents Cost of a child's annual membership in the museum's early days "A definite civic responsibility is awakened in children who belong; they feel that the Children's Museum is their own institution."
—Children's Museum Bulletin, Spring 1935

19 Age of Stewart Springer, a Butler University student hired as curator in 1926

\$167.85 spent on coal for heating the building in 1933, according to the treasurer's report

65 years the museum offered free admission

600 collection items moved to Garfield Park in 1926

130,000+ collection items today

\$35 Monthly rent at the museum's first home, the Propylaeum's carriage house

\$40 per month when heat was needed

4.03 billion years is the approximate age of the oldest specimen in the collection—a piece of surface rock called Acasta Gneiss

55 tons of sand poured onto the museum parking lot for 1993's Sandscrapers, featuring large-scale sand sculptures

17,652 guests visited on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2010, the highest single-day attendance

42 animals make up the Carousel—how many have you ridden?

70 gallons of a water/methyl alcohol mix circulate inside the Water Clock

1932 First Bulletin issued, the original Extra!

Tall Tales

How museum icons measure up.



**Brachiosaur
"Seymour"**
50 feet



**Fireworks
of Glass**
43 feet



Water Clock
26½ feet



Bumblebee
17 feet

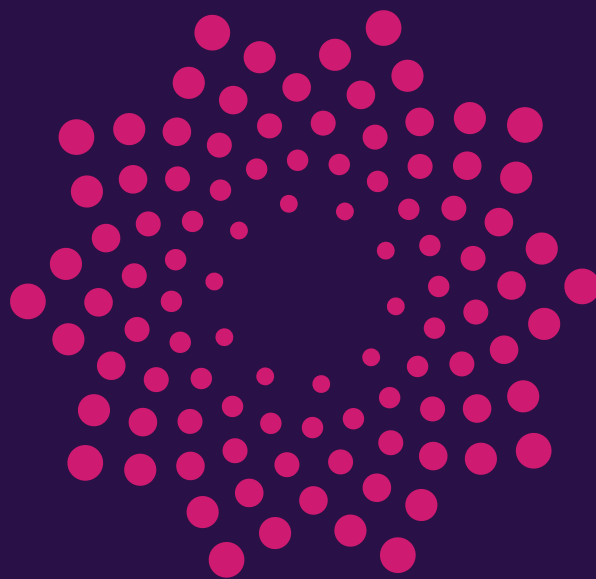
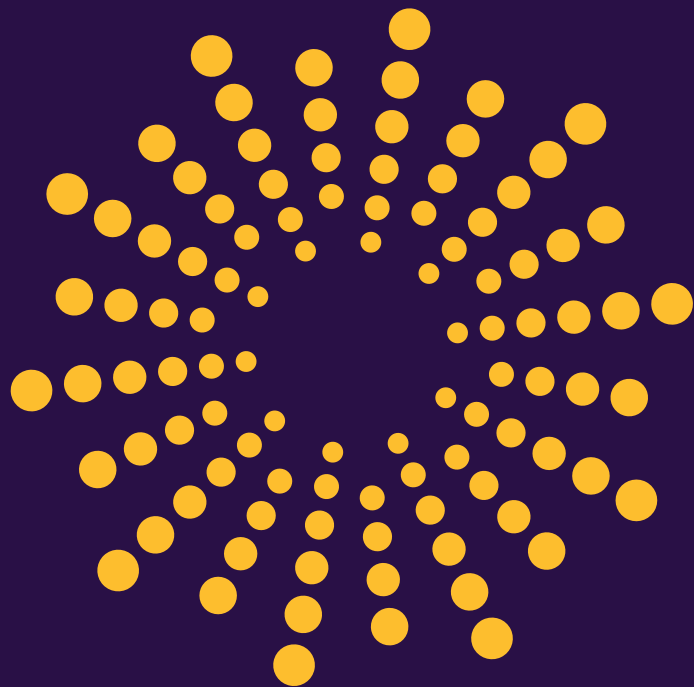


Martimus
9 feet

Did you know?

1. A seahorse named Sidney was the museum's first mascot, designed by museum trustee Kurt Vonnegut Sr. Sidney was retired in 1975.
2. Famous visitors over the years have included John Mellencamp, Elton John, Magic Johnson, Meryl Streep, Eleanor Roosevelt, Audrey Hepburn, and Mickey Mouse.
3. In 1984, Frank and Theresa Caplan donated over 50,000 toys and folk crafts.
4. The Art of the Muppets, open Oct. 5, 1985–Jan. 5, 1986, is considered the first blockbuster traveling exhibit to come to the museum.
5. The Lilly Playhouse in Carousel Wishes and Dreams was built in the early 1930s for Eli Lilly's daughter, Evie.





The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

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