



Carousel Wishes and Dreams

The *Carousel Wishes and Dreams* exhibit is located in the Mildred Compton Gallery. Its grand opening was in winter 2000. This magical, whimsical, permanent exhibit is designed for all ages. In keeping with the museum's mission to transform the lives of children and families, the Carousel exhibit was built to foster family traditions and sharing memories.



In 1975, one of the museum's greatest treasures was lowered through the roof into its home on Level 4. The young and not-so-young delight in the Carousel's starry surroundings, simulated through fiber-optic lighting and a restored holiday-window display from an old downtown department store. Similarly, a mirror maze incorporates carnival mirrors with wild perspectives that aid young visitors in developing

problem-solving and directional skills while they have fun. There is also an array of activities and artifacts hidden in nooks and crannies that delight all ages.

Another feature in the exhibit is a puzzles and games area with activities to enhance thinking skills while encouraging cooperative play. Other elements include a tree house, a walk-in kaleidoscope that surrounds visitors with color, and a playhouse set in a garden that changes with the seasons. In addition, most of the artifacts are playthings of the past and present, including pieces from the collection donated by Frank and Theresa Caplan.

As part of the magic of this area, a children's book was published to celebrate the gallery. Titled *Carousel to the Stars*, the book features poetry, illustrations, and a brief history of the Carousel, which resided in Broad Ripple Park from 1917 to the 1950s. *Carousel to the Stars* is dedicated to past museum president Mildred S. Compton, a leader whose vision gave a treasure of the past to the children of the future. In the book, children delight as the Carousel goes:

*'Round and 'round with the sound of
the wind,
Up and down and around once again.
Cheers and laughs echo as we spin,
'Round and 'round and 'round.*

The renovation of the Carousel gallery was part of the museum's 75th birthday celebration and took place during the international year of the Carousel.