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April 2020

Dear ACM Friend,

Akron Children's Museum has been providing unique, play-based learning experiences to foster growth and development in children in and around the Summit County community since its opening in 2016. In 2018 when I came on board to lead the museum, I could not have imagined that we would ever face a crisis quite like the one we are experiencing today. Our community's health is at great risk due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and together, we are doing everything possible to slow the transmission rate.

Your support now is essential to helping the museum weather this storm. As you can imagine, it was a tough but necessary decision we faced along with many other businesses just a couple of weeks ago. We have had to take the following steps during this time to reduce risk and further assess the situation:

1. Indefinitely close the museum;
2. Implement a mass layoff of staff members;
3. Pause our Capital Campaign expansion project;
4. Put a hold on museum memberships;
5. Cancel numerous scheduled events, birthday parties, group visits, and field trips.

We will continue to monitor local, state and federal guidelines and will reopen when we can safely provide access to the community. As you can imagine, a closure of this duration is a serious issue for an organization like ours that depends on admission revenue to cover a large portion of our operating expenses. Our Board of Directors and Trustees have been working together to find a path forward to ensure that we can continue to support your family's education for many years to come. In the past week we announced the painful decision to temporarily lay off many of our team members. These individuals are the face of Akron Children's Museum, bringing the wonders of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, the arts and nature to the public day in and day out. We are working to provide them as much assistance as possible.

In the meantime, I hope you will consider supporting the museum during this unprecedented time in one or more of the following ways which will help the museum continue to thrive upon its reopening:

1. Donate any dollar amount to be used for general operations of the museum;
2. Purchase a family membership(s) for yourself or others as a gift to use later;
3. Purchase a gift card in the amount of a camp session, birthday party or class trip;
4. Consider renewing an existing membership, knowing that you will receive the additional months to ensure a full year of Membership. All Memberships will be extended by the length of time that we are closed.

Our hope is that when we emerge from this crisis, we will be able to bring all of our team members back to our organization as quickly as possible so we can resume and rebuild our operations. For now, we will continue to operate with a reduced staff who will focus on seeking operational support from you and others who believe in the museum’s mission and want it to remain a treasured community asset for many years.

One last request - please tell others about our new online community of learners. We recently launched virtual activities, which have been highlighted in the news in the past few days. “S.T.E.A.M. Team Home Time” virtual activities is our new digital learning platform where you will find science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics activities, videos and other resources to keep learners of a variety of ages engaged. Check back regularly for new content and ideas. Curiosity never rests – even when it must stay home – and our goal is to help you and your families better understand, apply and enjoy informal education in your adjusted lives.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Trustees and all of the Akron Children’s Museum team, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support. We feel very lucky to be part of a community of learners that cares about building a more informed, engaged future.

Sincerely,



Traci J. Buckner

Executive Director, Akron Children’s Museum

