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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children's Museum Launches New Sensory Hours

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY- As part of National Autism Awareness Month, the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is introducing Sensory Hours, a new monthly program designed for families with young children with autism, on Sunday, April 9 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Parents and caregivers of children with autism are invited to MHCM for an open house event on Wednesday, March 29 from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm to explore exhibit galleries and learn more about Sensory Hours and the Museum as an autism supportive environment.

Developed in partnership with Anderson Center for Autism and with the support of its Autism Supportive Environment program, which is grant funded through Dutchess County's ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative, Sensory Hours invite families with children with autism and other sensory integration challenges to explore MHCM and its exhibits in a modified environment with reduced sound, designated quiet spaces, extra visual signage and sensory aids. Sensory Hours are offered on the second Sunday of each month from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, starting on Sunday April 9.

Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said, "We applaud the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum for embracing our 'ThinkDIFFERENTLY' initiative to foster a supportive environment for our local families of all abilities. The museum's Sensory Hours are a great example of an organization in Dutchess County adapting to meet the needs of neighbors with special needs – providing an informative and educational experience for all children, regardless of ability. Dutchess County is proud to fund the Anderson Center for Autism's 'Autism Supportive Environment' training program, which assists businesses design an environment that supports residents with autism and their families. We hope even more organizations and businesses in Dutchess County will follow the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum's example and 'ThinkDIFFERENTLY,' making our community even more accessible to every resident of every ability."

For more information about Sensory Hours, visit <http://mhcm.org/parents-caregivers/autism-support/>

Named Hudson Valley's 2016 Favorite "Kid Friendly Museum" and recipient of the 2015 Dutchess Tourism Family Entertainment Award of Distinction, the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is the ideal destination for families with young children. With exhibits that focus on early literacy, art, STEM, and the local community, the museum provides an educationally rich environment through which children have the opportunity to develop foundational skills, to engage in purposeful play, and to develop interpersonal connections. The museum is located in the heart of the historic waterfront in Poughkeepsie, just steps away from the Poughkeepsie Metro-North train station, the Walkway Over the Hudson's Elevator, fabulous restaurants, and a new city park. The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30am to 5:00pm and Sunday from 11:00am to 5:00pm. Admission is \$9.00 per person. Children under 1 year are free. Visit mhcm.org or call (845) 471-0589 for more information.

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