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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Foundation Picks Children's Museum to Complete Upper Landing Park**

*Nonprofit Plans to Restore Historic Buildings, Enhance Poughkeepsie Waterfront with new museum campus*

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY—The Dyson Foundation has selected the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum's plan to carry out a bold vision to enhance and complete Upper Landing Park along the City of Poughkeepsie waterfront. The Millbrook-based Dyson Foundation, which created the pocket park along the City's northern waterfront from a long vacant lot in 2013, chose the nonprofit Children's Museum's plan from several proposals offered in response to a request for proposals (RFPs) it solicited late last year.

The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, which borders Upper Landing Park to the south along Water Street, will now study the feasibility of transforming two vacant, but historic buildings on the Upper Landing Property—the Reynolds and Hoffman houses—into a new science center allowing for a major extension of its mission of empowering children and families from the Hudson Valley and beyond. The organization will also develop a plan for maintaining the waterfront parcel as a public park that provides access to the Walkway Over the Hudson State Park's waterfront elevator.

"After reviewing several strong RFPs, the Dyson Foundation's Board of Directors selected the Children's Museum's proposal because it offered a compelling plan for the restoration and adapted re-use of these two historically significant buildings while maintaining Upper Landing Park as an important riverfront amenity," said Dyson Foundation President Andrea Reynolds. "After creating the park in 2013, it was always the Foundation's goal to transfer stewardship of the property to a responsible nonprofit or municipal entity that could complete its development in the public interest. We think the Children's Museum offers a plan that fulfills that goal."

Although challenging, the prospect of acquiring Upper Landing Park and breathing new life into the Hoffman and Reynolds houses represents an exciting opportunity for the Children's Museum to grow its educational programming and services to an expanded audience base without uprooting the organization which has been based at its current location for more than

sixteen years, according to Lara Litchfield-Kimber, Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum.

"Knowing that we were considering an expansion, we started our planning efforts with the 30,000-foot view in order to consider both the needs of the families we serve as well as the greater educational needs of our region," stated Ms. Litchfield-Kimber. "We realized that instead of simply pushing walls out and doing more museum programming for young children, we have an opportunity to do something truly transformational for more families, the City of Poughkeepsie and the region as a whole, by creating the next level of interactive museum experiences for a greater age range of children."

After a year of rigorous planning activities that included working with museum consultants and community stakeholder groups from schools, colleges, local industry, and community leadership a visionary concept emerged: "The Museums at Upper Landing." Children's Museum leadership envisions a new museum campus that will preserve public green space and waterfront access in Upper Landing Park, while restoring and re-purposing the historically significant but vacant Hoffman House and Reynolds Buildings into two new museums focused on science and STEM education. Together with the Museum's current building and its waterfront pavilion, the campus would offer four museums in total, plus the public park.

Initial concepts include Hoffman House becoming an interactive science center for children ages 5-12; Reynolds Building becoming a community-curated museum devoted to issues at the cross-section of science and society for teens and adults; and the Museum's Pavilion becoming a food hub, focusing on the culinary arts, food systems, and agricultural STEM careers. Upper Landing Park will host public events and festivals and will continue to provide public green space and waterfront access. For more information regarding the Children Museum's initial vision for the Upper Landing property visit: <http://mhcm.org/vision-upper-landing/>.

"It is not often that a new science center or museum opens its doors, making this potential project a special prospect for the Hudson Valley Region," states Cristin Dorgelo, President and CEO of Association of Science-Technology Centers, the global organization serving community-based science institutions and headquartered in Washington, D.C. "The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is pursuing unique museum experiences to support families with STEM education and to engage the public in important issues at the forefront of science and technology."

Named "2017 Best Museum" by Hudson Valley Magazine and Hudson Valley's "2016 Favorite Kid-Friendly Museum," the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is the ideal destination for families with young children. With exhibits that focus on early literacy, art, early STEM, and the local community, the museum provides an educationally rich environment through which children have the opportunity to develop foundational skills through purposeful play. The Museum is located in the heart of the historic waterfront in Poughkeepsie nestled between two city parks, and just steps away from the Poughkeepsie Metro-North Train Station, the Walkway Over the Hudson's elevator, and fabulous restaurants. The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Admission is \$9.00 per person. Children under 1 year are free. Memberships available. Visit [mhcm.org](http://mhcm.org) or call (845) 471-0589 for more information.

The Dyson Foundation is a private, family-directed grantmaking foundation headquartered in Millbrook, New York. Established in 1957, the Foundation is led by Robert R. Dyson, who has served as its Chairman since 2000. The Foundation awards grants through a diverse regional funding program in Dutchess County and the Mid-Hudson Valley of New York State. The Dyson Foundation also makes grants outside the Hudson Valley to pre-selected organizations. In addition to its core work of grantmaking, the Foundation also initiates major projects that benefit the region and sponsors critical research that examines issues that impact the Hudson Valley. The Foundation's assets presently stand at approximately \$215,000,000 and in the year 2017 it awarded grants of over \$13,700,000.

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