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**CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PRESENTS "STORIES FROM THE LAND" FESTIVAL
Festival Kicks Off Year-Long Interpretive Land Acknowledgment Project**

Long Island Children's Museum will inspire visitors to deepen their connection to the land during "**Stories from the Land**," a two-day festival featuring indigenous artists, indigenous storytellers and land preservationists. Stories from the Land Festival, taking place on Friday, July 14 and Saturday, July 15 from noon to 3 p.m., is made possible with a Humanities New York Action Grant.

The "Stories from the Land Festival" continues the Children's Museum's land acknowledgment efforts and deepens its partnerships with the indigenous community and land protection allies. The Festival is the initial activity in a year-long interpretive Land Acknowledgment project that will result in the creation of two permanent art pieces (indoor and outdoor) presenting visual interpretations of Long Island Children's Museum's Land Acknowledgement Statement.

"LICM feels strongly that Land Acknowledgement goes beyond a statement and should reflect continued growth and educational opportunities for the Children's Museum and the families we serve," explained LICM Director of Special Projects & Community Initiatives Jeanmarie Mansfield. "This festival and the visual interpretations of our statement that will be produced allow children and their families to learn more about indigenous relationships with the land, both past and present, and reflect on their relationships both to the land and one another through the land. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Humanities New York, which helps us broaden and strengthen our understanding and relationships with local indigenous communities."

Visitors will hear from Shinnecock artist and storyteller **Denise Silva-Dennis** as she shares Indigenous interactive stories that illustrate the deep history and connection of the Indigenous people to the land. Silva-Dennis will share multiple stories each afternoon (noon, 12:40, 1:20, 2 and 2:40 p.m.); each highlighting the role

individuals play in protecting and preserving the resources Mother Earth provides us. Visitors will have the opportunity to share their own cultural stories and experiences about connections to the land at a Story Sharing Wall.

Artist **Ella Mahoney**, a member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head, MA, will work with visitors as they practice fabric dyeing using natural dyes, sourced from plants found in the Museum's garden. Children will learn flower-pounding and dip-dyeing techniques using a range of natural dyes. These techniques provide a valuable history lesson as they discover practices employed by indigenous members dating back thousands of years.

Dyed fabric pieces created by visitors will be collected and used by Mahoney in the creation of the outdoor interpretive art piece that will be installed next spring in LICM's outdoor exhibit space, "Our Backyard." She will also create an indoor fabric art piece for the Museum's lobby. The four-panel piece will depict the changing landscape over time – pre-colonization, colonization, present time and future hopes for our shared land. Stories visitors share during the Festival will help inform Mahoney's interpretive land acknowledgment pieces. The indoor piece will be installed in December of this year.

Friends of the Hempstead Plains Program Director **Doug Schmid** will run an activity station allowing children to help create a native bed in LICM's outdoor exhibit. Native plants that will be used include butterfly weed, milkweed, native grasses and more. While planting, children will learn the history of the land and how its natural resources sustain us and our shared responsibility to protect it. Children will also make biodegradable newspaper planters and plant milkweed seeds to take home to start their native plant gardens.

All activities will be held at the Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City, NY. For the safety of our visitors, Adults are not permitted in the Museum without children; Museum visitors under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Museum admission: **\$17** for adults and children over 1 year old, **\$16** for seniors, FREE to museum members and children under 1 year old. Additional fees for theater and special programs may apply. For additional information, contact 516-224-5800.

Summer Hours: Long Island Children's Museum is open daily from July 5 through September 3, 2023.

About the Long Island Children’s Museum (www.licm.org)

The mission of Long Island Children’s Museum is to connect all our communities’ children, and those who care for them, to a life of wonder, imagination and exploration. At LICM, children discover their passions and their relationship to the world we share. The 40,000-square-foot museum welcomes nearly 275,000 children and adults annually. The private, not-for-profit institution chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, offers museum-based educational programs and cultural experiences, as well as an extensive community outreach program offered in schools, libraries and youth centers across Long Island. Additionally, the Children’s Museum operates the historic Nunley’s Carousel in association with Nassau County, one of three intact Stein & Goldstein carousels still in existence.

LICM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), recognized as the field's gold standard for museum excellence and signifies a museum’s quality, credibility and deep commitment to mission and community. Less than 3% of the nation’s more than 30,000 museums have earned this recognition. LICM is currently the only children’s museum in NY State, and just one of 16 nationwide, to achieve accreditation. The Museum is the recipient of the 2012 National Medal for Museum & Library Service, the highest honor conferred on museums for extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions.

LICM Land Acknowledgment Statement

A Land Acknowledgment Statement is an opportunity to respect, understand and acknowledge the history of the land and its original inhabitants.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples, both past and present, have known Long Island as *Sewanhacky*, the Island of Shells. Long Island Children’s Museum (LICM) honors these Indigenous people and the Meroke (Merrick) Nation in particular, who inhabited the land on which the Museum sits, previously the Hempstead Plains. LICM acknowledges the past and continued impact from the forcible removal of many of the Indigenous people of Long Island through colonization.

We are grateful to these original inhabitants and their contemporary descendants for their cultivation of this land. LICM pledges to listen and learn from their example and wise guidance, and serve as an educational resource to elevate their voices, experiences and expertise to the families we serve.