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THE PIGEON COMES TO LONG ISLAND! A MO WILLEMS EXHIBIT OPENS

Long Island Children's Museum Run Begins January 21, 2023

The Pigeon Comes to Long Island! A Mo Willems Exhibit makes its debut at Long Island Children's Museum on Saturday, January 21, 2023, for a four month stay. The exhibit, co-organized by Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, is inspired by the art and characters of the beloved children's book author and illustrator, Mo Willems.

In selecting this exhibit, LICM was focused on instilling in its visitors a love of reading. "Mo Willems' books are frequently the starting point for a child to understand the power of choice they hold in what to read... and reread," explains LICM Director of Education Aimee Terzulli. "Willems creates characters that are playful and curious and funny, which gets children invested in wanting to spend more time with them as they choose to read more of his popular stories."

Familiar characters are featured in the exhibit, including best friend duo Elephant and Piggie, faithful companion Knuffle Bunny, The Pigeon, the wily city bird best known for his antics in *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Activities will give visitors the opportunity to make art that is inspired by Mo Willems and to learn about the rich social and emotional lives of the author's characters. The exhibit will also feature illustrations, including sketches and other preliminary materials, by Mo Willems.

In this play-and-learn exhibit visitors can:

- Have a hilarious conversation in the voices of Elephant, Gerald and Piggie at a double-sided phone booth.
- Make Elephant and Piggie dance with old-time animation.
- Put on a wearable bus and take a drive through the exhibit.

- Spin the laundromat washing machine and uncover Knuffle Bunny and other surprises!
- Dress up Naked Mole Rat and send him down the runway for a lone-of-a-kind fashion show.
- Stack lightweight blocks to create their own terrible monster of funny friend.
- Launch foam hot dogs at the Pigeon and play the plinko game to give the Duckling a cookie.
- Try out techniques that Mo uses for his own books.

Long Island Children's Museum will open the exhibit with a themed weekend on January 21-22 from 1-3 p.m., as well as public workshops throughout the exhibit's stay.

Visitors to the Children's Museum will be able to spend lots of time with Willems' characters as the LICM Theater will feature *Elephant & Piggie's "We are in a Play!"* (April 23 – June 3) along with Willem's newest production *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* (February 11 -March 25 to complement the exhibit experience. Performances will be offered for both family and school audiences.

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 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.

About Children Museum of Pittsburgh

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh is a place that provides innovative and inclusive museum experiences that inspire kindness, joy, creativity and curiosity for all learners. Our imaginative, open-ended exhibits and programs give families the opportunity to explore topics like art, making and social-emotional learning in ways that are authentic, meaningful, and most of all, fun! The museum is open every day, from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

The mission of The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, a non-profit organization in Amherst, MA, is to inspire a love of art and reading through picture books. A leading advocate in its field,, The Carle collects, preserves, presents and celebrates picture book illustrations from around the world. In addition to underscoring the cultural, historical, and artistic significance of pictures books and the art form. The Carle offers educational programs that provide a foundation for arts integration and literacy.

Eric and Barbara Carle founded the Museum in November 2002. Eric Carle is the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books, including his classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The Carle houses more than 11,000 objects, including 7,300 permanent collection illustrations, three art galleries, an art studio, a theater, picture books and scholarly libraries, and educational programs for families, scholars, educators, and schoolchildren. Educational offerings include professional training for educators around the country and four onsite graduate programs in Children's Literature in collaboration with Simmons College. For further information visit the Museum's website at www.carlemuseum.org

About Mo Willems

Mo Willems is an author, illustrator, animator, and playwright. He was the inaugural Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence (2019-2022), and he continues to collaborate in creating fun new stuff involving classical music, opera, comedy concerts, dance, painting and digital works with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, Ben Folds, Yo-Yo Ma, and others.

Willems is best known for his #1 *New York Times* bestselling picture books, which have been awarded three Caldecott Honors (*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*; *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*; *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*), and his celebrated Elephant and Piggie early reader series, which has been awarded two Theodor Geisel Medals and five Geisel Honors.

Mo's art has been exhibited around the world, including major solo retrospectives at the High Museum (Atlanta) and the New-York Historical Society (NYC). Over the last decade, Willems has become the most produced playwright of Theater for Young Audiences in America, having written or co-written four musicals based on his books.

He began his career as a writer and animator on PBS' *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards (writing). Other television work includes two series on Cartoon Network: *Sheep in the Big City* (creator + head writer) and *Codename: Kids Next Door* (head writer). Mo's recent TV projects include the live action comedy special *Don't Let the Pigeon Do Storytime!* and an animated rock opera special based on *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, which premiered on HBOMax. In April 2023, Mo will celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* with the publication of *Be the Bus: The Lost & Profound Wisdom of The Pigeon* (Union Square Kids, April 4, 2023), a humor book for adults, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! 20th Anniversary Edition* (Hyperion Books for Children, April 4, 2023) including an exclusive board game. His papers reside at Yale University's Beinecke Library.