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CHILDREN'S MUSEUM CELEBRATES INDIA'S FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Diwali Festival Presents Multi-Sensory Exploration of Holiday

GARDEN CITY, NY -- Long Island Children's Museum invites families from across the region to celebrate Diwali, India's "Festival of Lights," on Sunday, October 23 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Visitors will have the chance to get an early start on their holiday activities or discover the traditions practiced by families around the world to welcome a new year. The event is made possible with the support of New York Council for the Humanities.

For those families familiar with Diwali, and for those who celebrate it in their homes, the five hour event will provide an opportunity and setting to share this important cultural holiday with others unfamiliar with it. "Welcoming the community's families to share their traditions at the Museum is a role we relish," noted LICM President Suzanne LeBlanc. "It allows us to increase cultural understanding among our visitors and celebrate Long Island's expanding diversity."

The five hour celebration will include the sights, sounds and tastes of the most important holiday in Hinduism. At LICM, families will learn about traditions practiced by families around the world and in their own community. Many of the traditions will be easily relatable to families of different backgrounds from holidays they celebrate throughout the year. Diwali is a harvest holiday that includes family gatherings, decorating the home, expressing gratitude, lighting lamps and exchanging gifts; traditions that many visitors will connect with.

Diwali activities at LICM will include:

- **Dance performances and workshops** - Indian dancer, Abha Roy, will lead troupe members from the Srijan Dance Center as they perform *and teach* classical and folk dances representing the North, East, South, and West regions of India.
- **Costume Collection** – Clothing from different parts of India (including Rajasthan, Bengal, Kashmir, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu) will be on display. Others will be available for children to try on.

- **Traditional crafts** - Children will create *torans*, the traditional household decoration used as a symbol of welcome, design rangolis, the colorful designs traditionally created with rice flour and paint wooden spoons, representing the first day tradition of shopping for new household utensils
- **Holiday Snacks** - Visitors will be able to sample sweet and savory foods traditional to the Diwali Festival.
- **Sibling Love** - Each day of the Diwali holiday has its own focus. The last day of Diwali is focused on the special bond between brothers and sisters. At LICM, children will explore this as they make a bracelet to present to a sibling or friend.
- **Holiday Take Away** - Families participating in the Festival will receive a diya as a gift to take home with them and use in their own celebration. The word Diwali translates to “row on lights”; diyas are the clay lamps used extensively throughout the home to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness

The Children’s Museum is working with a multi-generational group of community advisors to develop the multi-sensory Diwali celebration. Committee members include Abha Roy (Richmond Hill, NY), Surindar Kaur Selhi (Westbury, NY), Nandine Hemraj (Elmont, NY), Rima Patel (Inwood, NY), and Nirmal Sabu (Williston Park, NY). Other cultural specialists assisting on the Festival project are: Traditional Attire expert: Dr. Anju G. Modak (NY, NY), Costumes and Wardrobe assistant: Manishi Agrawal (Elmhurst, NY), Rangoli workshop: Shamdai Samroo (Jamaica Estates, NY), Master of ceremonies: Nalini Raghoonauth (Center Moriches, NY) and Dance workshop assistants: Sarika Persaud (Astoria, NY) and Melisa Bhagwandin (South Ozone Park, NY). In addition, the Children’s Museum will receive the assistance of the South Asian Student Association of Adelphi University, a five star student organization that aims to spread South Asian culture and diversity by engaging students in different events and activities throughout campus.

All activities will be held at the Long Island Children’s Museum, 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City, NY. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Hours: Tuesday-Sunday from 10 am.-5 p.m. Museum admission: \$13 for adults and children over 1 year old, \$12 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.

About the Long Island Children’s Museum

The Long Island Children’s Museum invites visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to explore freely, discover their passions, and appreciate the communities and world we share. The 40,000-square-foot museum is a learning laboratory where hands-on exhibits invite visitors to experiment, examine, and play. The Museum welcomes 250,000 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. 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.

Photo Caption and Links

Diwali Dancing – Enjoy classical and traditional folk dancers performed during Diwali celebrations at Long Island Children’s Museum.

www.licm.org/images/Diwali_dancers.jpg

Diwali Festival – LICM welcomes families to celebrate, explore and enjoy the customs and traditions of Diwali on Sunday, October 23.

www.licm.org/images/Diwali_Festival_logo.jpg