

## **Breaking Barriers: Discovery Gateway Children's Museum Opens Doors for Underserved Families Across Utah**

Salt Lake City, UT — Sept. 16, 2025 — Discovery Gateway Children's Museum believes every child deserves the chance to learn, play, and grow—regardless of financial or social barriers. Through initiatives like the Museum Inclusion Fund, supported by generous donors, the museum consistently creates opportunities for underserved families across Utah to experience the power of hands-on learning, which inspires creativity, curiosity, and connection.

In a state where around 9% of children live in poverty, where only 41% of low-income kids attend preschool, and where access to affordable child care drives families to quit jobs, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum's Inclusion Fund isn't just a program—it's a lifeline.

Utilizing donations to the Museum Inclusion Fund, key staff at the museum work hand in hand with local nonprofit partners, like Ronald McDonald House and International Rescue Committee, to identify families most in need—those facing financial challenges, transportation difficulties, or other obstacles that often prevent them from accessing cultural and educational resources like the museum. These families are then welcomed to Discovery Gateway Children's Museum for free several times throughout the year, ensuring their children can benefit from the museum's engaging exhibits and developmental opportunities.

"Childhood wonder should never be limited by circumstance," said Kathleen Bodenlos, CEO of Discovery Gateway Children's Museum. "By removing barriers, we're not just opening our doors—we're opening pathways for children to explore, imagine, and discover their full potential. For many, a first experience with dinosaurs, trains, or hands-on science can ignite a spark of curiosity that inspires dreams, shapes futures, and helps children see possibilities far beyond their current circumstances."

In Fiscal Year 2025, families from the 15 community partners were given free admissions and free parking to attend four different days at the museum. 1,328 guests attended and enjoyed special event activities, cultural performances, and free pizza donated by Sizzling Platter's Lend-A-Hand Program. Companies that help fund this initiative include Granite Credit Union, First Utah Bank, and Utah Transit Authority.

In addition to special events for Inclusion Fund participants, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum extends accessibility year-round by offering discounted admission for families who receive food stamps (SNAP) or other government assistance. This commitment ensures more Utah families can enjoy the museum regularly, regardless of income level.

For many children, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum is more than a museum—it's a rare chance to experience a safe, inspiring environment that builds critical early development skills while strengthening family connections. For parents, it's the peace of mind knowing their children are not only having fun, but also learning in ways that will prepare them for the future.

Through the Museum Inclusion Fund and ongoing accessibility initiatives, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum continues its mission to serve ALL Utah families, making play-based learning an opportunity that no child is left without.

### **About Discovery Gateway Children's Museum**

Located in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City at 444 West 100 South, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum is a premier destination for hands-on learning and imaginative play. A staple in the community for almost 50 years, it features 60,000 square feet of interactive exhibits designed to spark curiosity and creativity in children of all ages. Additionally, it is Utah's only museum with a dedicated focus on STEM education, offering immersive experiences in science, technology, engineering, and math, alongside exhibits that highlight art, health, and community. Welcoming 177,000 visitors annually, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum is committed to educational experiences that inspire lifelong learning and foster the next generation of innovators and leaders.

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