



For Immediate Release  
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Freeport, Illinois – February 4, 2021 – The Children’s Hands-On Museum of Northwest Illinois (CHOM) is pleased to announce it has entered into the first phase of its 2021 “Playing it Safe” reopening strategy and is now accepting reservations for families to visit the museum.

“As we are approaching a full year since the pandemic-related closure, I can say for myself and the Board of Directors, we are really excited about reopening and giving families another option for fun things to do” said Sarah Flashing, Executive Director. “We hope our phased opening will provide some excitement now and hope for what the future holds.”

CHOM has adopted an exhibit circuit strategy. After families make an online reservation limited to 6 visitors including adults and children, during their visit they will move from exhibit to exhibit in a timed, orderly fashion that will allow for family-distancing. *No walk-up visitors will be allowed at this time.* Face masks are required for all visitors and masks and hand sanitizer are available. Toys for each exhibit will be rotated out and cleaned as families move around. The museum is also equipped with disinfecting equipment and air purifiers. Families are asked to not enter if anyone feels sick. Temperatures are taken of everyone wishes to enter.

Through the generosity of The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, the Stephenson County Youth Diversion Grant, and the ongoing support of our members and donors, CHOM has secured the necessary equipment and supplies, and has developed a strategy to help families stay safe while still enjoying many of the exhibits that were in place prior to the COVID-19 closure. Hours are limited at this time but constantly under evaluation.

“This is just the first phase of our re-opening. CHOM will remain aware of the guidelines from our local, state and federal officials and guidance of the Stephenson County Health Department,” said Sarah Flashing. “We are taking necessary precautions to help keep everyone safe—guests, staff, and volunteers. Like everyone else, we are looking forward to arriving at some sense of normal in the months to come.”

CHOM will be open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm through March. Families can register to visit online at [www.chomnwil.org/reservations/](http://www.chomnwil.org/reservations/) Larger groups interested in visiting CHOM should email [info@chomnwil.org](mailto:info@chomnwil.org) to make arrangements.

The Children’s Hands-On Museum of Northwest Illinois is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, committed to offering an accessible, affordable, interactive, and educational environment that will inspire children and families to learn about themselves and our culturally diverse world. Without the support of our members, volunteers and generous donors, we would not be able to continue our commitment to nurturing a love of learning in children. For more information, visit us online at [www.chomnwil.org](http://www.chomnwil.org).

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