



News

A museum for growing children
The Children's Metamorphosis
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The Met Children's Museum to Close Doors After Sixteen Years

*Increased expenses and diminishing sponsorships result in
eviction from downtown Derry location*

July 18, 2007, Derry NH — The Children's Metamorphosis today announced that growing debt and diminishing corporate support will force the children's museum to close its doors and cease operation August 31, 2007.

Established in 1991, the non-profit "Met" children's museum moved from its original North Londonderry home to downtown Derry in 2002. The new location proved successful in most respects: membership grew from 300 to a peak of 800 families, daily attendance and program participation rose significantly, and records show the museum brought more than 30,000 visitors annually to downtown Derry from towns throughout southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts.

Unfortunately, the relocation to the Derry space and renovations the Met funded to make the space usable required a significant, still unpaid bank loan. Moreover, while nationally most children's museums enjoy free or highly subsidized rent, the Met did not. Instead the museum leased space from Derry Depot Square Holdings, LLC for a reasonable yet sizable monthly fee, and also remained responsible for the costs of ongoing electrical, plumbing, and other repairs. At the same time, corporate sponsorships and donations dropped below previous levels, and as a result the Met has fallen significantly behind in paying the monthly lease fee.

After multiple generous grace periods and extended negotiations since July of last year, the landlord has informed the Met that it is now beginning the legal eviction process. The Met in fact received the formal document beginning this process yesterday.

"We hate to disappoint the thousands of kids who enjoy the Met and we'll miss our role as a promising tenant in downtown Derry," said Tracy LaPlante, executive director of the Met. "But Depot Square Holdings has been more than fair. Short of some miraculous new source of funding or some other sudden solution, we really see no choice but to close the Met for good."

Refunds of The Met's annual membership fee are not possible, but all current Members will receive a free upgrade to membership in the Association for Children's Museums, giving them free access to hundreds of sites around the country. Families and groups with Party Room and program reservations already booked for after August 31 will receive a refund. Plans for disposition of the animals, exhibits, and other assets of the Met as well as out-placing efforts for its seven employees are just beginning.

Members should check the Met's website at www.childrensmet.org or call (603) 425-2560 for the latest information.

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