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## **THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM HOSTS FIRST PUBLIC EVENT AT BLUE BACK SQUARE; ANNOUNCES \$236,000 GRANT FROM TRAVELERS**

***Mayor Scott Slifka calls for townwide support of future museum site in Elmwood; tribute to retiring head E. Forand culminates formal program***

West Hartford, CT (June 13, 2007)...The Children's Museum held its eleventh annual gala on Friday evening, June 8th at Blue Back Square—the first event of any kind to be held at the still-under-construction major development site in West Hartford. The capacity crowd of 400 heard an announcement from Robert Brody, Senior Vice President of Travelers that the company is funding a \$236,000 grant to The Children's Museum to bring new digital full dome technology to the Gengras Planetarium, soon to be renamed the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium when installation is completed in September 2007, making the science theater the most advanced planetarium in Connecticut. The gala, the Museum's most successful ever, was entitled "A *Bright Future*", and celebrated the vibrant future of The Children's Museum and the growth and progress of West Hartford.

The Museum's event, which included an array of festivities such as live and silent auctions, sit down dinner, and dancing, was highlighted by remarks from West Hartford Mayor Scott Slifka who strongly supported The Children's Museum and called for it to be a major priority project in the redevelopment of Elmwood. The keynote feature of the formal program was a retirement tribute to Edward J. Forand Jr., former President and CEO of the Museum, who recently stepped down after eleven years of leadership. Chairman of the Board Howard Shafer presented a plaque to Forand for his achievements.

The gala was held on the third floor of the first of the new Blue Back Square buildings due to open this summer, at 65 Memorial Road, also future home to Healthtrax<sup>R</sup> Fitness & Wellness, where the crowd had a panoramic view of Blue Back's construction progress. Presenting sponsor of the event was TD Banknorth and NBC 30 was the gala's lead sponsor.

The Children's Museum is committed to igniting the curiosity of young people through science and nature. In addition to the Museum and the Gengras Planetarium, the organization includes the United Technologies Wildlife Sanctuary, Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, and The Children's Museum Preschool, one of the oldest preschools in the country. The Children's Museum serves close to 200,000 people annually, and is the fifth oldest children's museum in the country, and Connecticut's largest museum. Located at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford, the museum is accessible from I-84 Exit 43 and offers free parking. For more information, visit the website at [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).

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