



NEWS RELEASE

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IMAGINE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN FULL TIME

The first Sunday of every month GRANDfamilies are invited to a free program at the Museum.

Everett, Washington – In an effort to support families in our community, Imagine Children's Museum is offering free admission for GRANDfamilies the first Sunday of every month from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Families are encouraged to stay and continue to play once Museum opens to public at 11:00 a.m.

Grandparents and the grandchildren (ages 1-12, chronological) they are caregivers to full time can participate in hands-on interactive play during a less crowded time. While making connections to other GRANDfamilies and discovering community resources.

Between the years 2016 -2018 the number of children reported living in Kinship Care in Washington State has grown to over 51,000 children (The Annie E. Casey Foundation). Many of these children are living with grandparents. Many more are being cared for by relatives but not being reported out of fear of losing the right to care for them. Unfortunately, this prohibits them from accessing many resources that are available to them.

While keeping these children with siblings in a stable and loving environment is preferable to foster care, it can understandably take a toll on the grandparents. Unplanned necessities such as added housing capacity, additional medical and counseling needs, food and clothing and the need for legal counsel can put an enormous financial strain on families. Having young ones to raise again comes with many challenges that can be overwhelming.

"I am in awe of the grandparents I have met in what they are taking on. While many of their friends are gearing up for retirement, travel and more down-time, they are attending school conferences, working longer than planned, juggling daycare and sporting events a second time around." Imagine's Impact Manager Bonnie Eckley said.

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“We felt we had a unique opportunity to provide a free and safe resource for these families to come and spend time with other families in the same situation. At Imagine, the children can learn and play without fear of being asked where their mom or dad is. The grandparents can find solace in knowing they are not alone in the heroic task ahead of them. Many feel very isolated in their new reality.” Eckley said.

GRANDfamilies program participant and Grandmother Angela McCloskey explained, “The time we spend at the Museum is a safe place for us. I know I can relax in an environment where I am surrounded by other grandparents in a similar situation to mine. I know my grandson is having fun and learning so that gives me tremendous piece of mind. For that amount of time, nothing else is weighing on us. We can just play!”

Families are asked to register in advance at www.imaginecm.org/grandfamilies-registration. Space is limited.

ABOUT IMAGINE CHILDREN’S MUSEUM

Imagine Children’s Museum (Imagine) began in 1993 as the result of a grassroots effort to give children and families a place to play and learn in Snohomish County. Since opening the Museum in downtown Everett in 2004, our programs, exhibits and activities have drawn over two million people from the Puget Sound region and beyond. Now we serve more than 251,000 people annually through the Museum and outreach programs.

Imagine serves children ages 1-12 and their caregivers. Three levels of interactive Museum exhibits and classes are designed to develop academic and life skills—social/emotional, physical, critical thinking, independence and self-confidence—in children of all abilities regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status.

Imagine works with schools, childcare centers, social service providers and other nonprofits to bring playful learning opportunities to children throughout Snohomish County. A summer literacy program and afterschool science clubs in area schools are among the ways we work to provide education and emotional support and guidance to those children who need it most.

The Museum is located on the corner of Wall and Hoyt Streets in downtown Everett. For hours and admission information, visit www.ImagineCM.org or call (425) 258-1006.

If you’d like more information on this topic please call Bonnie Eckley at (425) 258-1006, Ext. 1016 or email at BonnieE@imaginecm.org

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