

COUNCIL COMMENTARY



# New museum also is sustainable

By Greg Stanton  
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Attention parents and caregivers: if you're looking for a fun, interactive place to entertain and engage your young children, look no further. The Children's Museum of Phoenix is now open and is a great way to stay cool from the scorching summer heat.

I took my 17-month-old son, Trevor, to the grand opening weekend and can personally say the experience is fun and educational, all at the same time. In fact, the museum's mission is to engage the minds, muscles and imaginations of children and the grown-ups who care about them. It also focuses on learning through play, with emphasis on early childhood education and school-readiness.

The museum has been a long-time coming; numerous volunteers came together to create the project's public-private partnership between the Museum and city of Phoenix and made it a reality. "With the opening of the Children's Museum of Phoenix, I'm inspired by the words of noted anthropologist Margaret Meade, who once said: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has,'" said Tom Ambrose, chairman of the museum's board of directors. "This new children's museum, like so many of our community's long-standing cultural attractions, began as a humble, grass-roots effort by a small group of families, who recognized the need—and the value—of a special place dedicated to the development of the young children of our city."

There are 35,000 square feet of hands-on, educational exhibits for children up to the age of 10. There will be a total of 20 exhibits, including an exhibit called Place for Under Threes. This is a gallery for the youngest visitors and a favorite of my son. Children (as well as adults) are able to crawl under a tree, watch planes from the deck and

sustainable building is one that successfully reuses an old building—that's what makes this new museum so exciting. The museum is located at 215 N. 7th St. in the heart of downtown Phoenix, in the historic Monroe School Building. Phoenix voters overwhelmingly approved \$10.5 million in cultural bond funds for the project in 2001. The funds were used by the city to purchase the Monroe School as a site for the museum, as well as pay design costs and partial construction costs. The museum raised an additional \$3.9 million to complete construction. The museum building is owned by the city and will be operated by the museum through a long-term operating agreement.

"The renovation of the 1913 Monroe School carries on a recent tradition of the city of Phoenix to partner with others to preserve and reuse our historic school buildings," said Jim McPherson, Arizona Advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "In addition to Monroe, several other historic schools are back in service for the public good: Franklin, George Washington Carver, Grace Court and Phoenix Union. And now being renovated are McKinley School and the three remaining historic buildings at Steele Indian School Park. We're sending a message to our children that honoring the past is forward-looking as well. Reusing existing buildings is recycling at its best."

If you haven't yet visited the Children's Museum of Phoenix, be sure to get your tickets now. For more information, visit [www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org](http://www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org). You and your children are in for a delightful experience!

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