

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

FAMILY

Contact:

Jay E. Nachman

215.923.5978 / jnachman@nmajh.org

215.868.8057 (c)

Ilana Blumenthal

215.391.4662 / iblumenthal@nmajh.org

267.294.8425 9 (c)

Family-Friendly Exhibit Areas Abound in New National Museum of American Jewish History

PHILADELPHIA – If the new National Museum of American Jewish History doesn't resemble the museums that you may have grown up with, it's probably because there are more exhibit areas here that parents and children can enjoy together.

For example, on the fourth floor, "Foundations of Freedom" (1654-1880), a colonial-era exhibit, featuring a model of an 18th century shipping vessel, beaver pelt and Jewish ritual objects, helps visitors of all ages come to grips with three key aspects of Jewish life in the New World – shipping, trade and preservation of Jewish traditions.

In another exhibit, View-Masters illuminate images of transportation, immigration and the work-world of 19th century Americans. Custom-drawn scenes of Jewish life pose universal questions such as, "How does your family celebrate holidays?"

101 South Independence Mall East
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2517

more ...

Tel 215 923 3811

Fax 215 923 0763

nmajh.org

FAMILY/ADD 1

In the Fanny Brooks children's gallery, also on the fourth floor, the story of immigrant pioneers Fanny and Julius Brooks comes to life, their story serving as an example of 19th century American Jews who journeyed westward to settle and build new communities. Gallery visitors can pack for the journey, build a campfire, prepare a meal, visit a trading post, and learn about the hardships on the trail, while listening to a soundscape of life on the prairie.

Children will be able to explore a covered wagon, try on pioneer clothing, and decide what they would pack on westward journeys of their own. On the same floor, they can also try on masks in a gallery that depicts how late 19th century American Jews celebrated the Jewish holiday of Purim at balls with a decidedly American flavor.

On the third floor, "Dreams of Freedom" (1880-1945), young visitors can set the Sabbath table in a model, turn-of-the-century tenement apartment and try on period clothing in a model tenement bedroom to see how children in the early 1900s got ready for school.

In a gallery focusing on early 20th century American education, school desks open to reveal period school supplies and books. Young visitors can pick up children's books about life in America's big cities during that era and read them with their families.

With the help of mechanical interactive equipment, a garment industry exhibit paints a picture of the factory life of garment workers in early 20th century America. The third floor exhibit demonstrates how an early sewing machine operated, shows the pieces that went into a finished garment, and displays garments produced in a typical sweatshop. A mechanical crank can be turned to reveal facts about the working environment in the industry's early days in America.

more ...

FAMILY/ADD 2

Children-friendly exhibit areas can also be found on the museum's second floor, "Choices and Challenges of Freedom" (1945-Today). For example, there's a model postwar suburban house complete with a dog house that children can climb through and a model summer camp with a bunk bed and Adirondack chairs, a trunk packed for camp, and a digital archive of camp photos from over 60 years of Jewish summer camping throughout the United States. Visitors can browse the digital archive in the gallery and add photos of their camping experiences to the database by uploading from home.

Also on the second floor, flip panels embedded in the gallery walls reveal questions and answers on a host of topics ranging from suburbanization to Jewish summer camping to Soviet Jewry.

Reading areas can be found throughout the museum on a broad range of themes, including westward expansion and 19th century pioneering, mass migration, 20th century American Jewish life and Jewish holidays.

"This is a family-friendly exhibition that includes many opportunities for children to learn and explore through hands-on learning, media interactives, and storybooks placed throughout the exhibition," said Michael Rosenzweig, the Museum's president and CEO.

When it comes to interactive, educational fun, the National Museum of American Jewish History reaches out to every member of the family in ways they probably never experienced before.