MISSION
The Peoria PlayHouse Children’s Museum provides children with the tools and inspiration they need to be explorers and creators of the world. We do this in part through understanding, supporting, and promoting play in the fullest sense of the word, one that includes imagination and creativity.
Dear Friends and Supporters:

I moved to Peoria four years ago. I came here not for a job, or because of roots in the Midwest, but because my family and I visited once and immediately knew that this was the right place for us. Over two days in June 2013 we met wonderful, smart, welcoming people and enjoyed a sampling of the many events, performances, and destinations the city has to offer. A few months later, we had moved to Peoria.

As wonderful as Peoria is, the PlayHouse makes it even better. PlayHouse staff recognize the potential impact of the work we do. Imagine our young visitors twenty-five years from now: these young adults are comfortable experimenting, and understand that they can create new things. They know how to identify the tools they need to succeed, and how to learn to use these tools. They understand that small failures lead to big successes. They are starting new businesses, and Peoria is home to hundreds of start-ups employing thousands of people. Neighborhoods are diversifying, as these young men and women easily befriend people from different backgrounds. They buy homes knowing that they have the power to transform their new neighborhoods. And they are impacting their communities through active political involvement – the majority of eligible adults vote in local elections.

As these young people have children of their own they take them to the PlayHouse, as well as the zoo, the nature center, the Riverfront Museum, art galleries; they visit Chicago and St. Louis to learn from the Field Museum and the Magic House and the Art Institute. They are helping their own children become explorers and creators of the world.

We invite you to dream with us, and collaborate in creating a beautiful future with and for our children.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Shulman Herz
Director, Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum
From its inception, the PlayHouse was intended to serve all children. To make this possible, the museum created the Explorer Program, which allows low-income families free three visits per year, as well as heavily discounted annual memberships.

The PlayHouse also offers free admission to active military service members and their families from Memorial Day to Labor Day through the national Blue Star program.

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2016 was the first full year of PlayHouse operations. During this year, staff and visitors learned about the benefits of play, as we all explored this new museum together!

**Empowered to explore**
Exploration is an important first step in learning about the world, and understanding how to live within and transform your environment. Children explore with their eyes, hands, and sometimes their mouths. The museum’s six exhibits provide a safe space to explore; they also provide a jumping-off place for learning about the larger world of farms, rivers, trains, and more.

**Empowered to imagine**
As a child plays, a plastic disc becomes a hamburger, sand becomes a landscape, a bucket becomes a hat. Imaginative play encourages children to develop vocabulary and storytelling; it helps them learn and practice strategies for collaboration. At the PlayHouse, children are constantly imagining new worlds and stories, transforming the museum into a magical space where anything can happen.

**Empowered to create**
Whether children are figuring out how to make a tower out of toy bricks or an imaginary meal, or using carpentry and recyclables to create a brand new object, creation - making new things - requires experimentation and problem solving. While creating, children not only learn to use tools and materials, they learn how to learn and adapt, so that they know they can solve the next challenge to come their way.

**Empowered to learn**
Children learn through play. As they climb in the chicken coop climber, try on costumes in the theater, dig in the kinetic sand, and send balls through wind tubes, they are exercising and improving social and motor skills, creativity, problem solving, and more.

“Fell in love with the PlayHouse from day one. My daughters spend hours here every time we visit! Their all-time favorite exhibits are the Sand Porch and Motion Commotion. However, each visit they find something new to explore. They have learned about nutrition, gardening/farming, what a “microscope” is, what a dentist does, what animals live in water, and so many other lessons through their experiences at the PlayHouse!”
-Sarah Chapman, PlayHouse member

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Memberships sold: 2,020

Facebook rating: 4.8 out of 5 stars

Students visiting on field trips: 5,288

Visitors: 86,957

Busiest day: April 9th - 1,191 visitors

2016 by the numbers

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2016 PlayHouse Supporters

Thank you to the organizations and individuals who donated during 2016

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Polly and Glen Barton
Dr. Lindsey Ma
Dr. Christa Spates-Bell

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River City Construction
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Shine Therapy Services
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Thank you to the many wonderful people who have volunteered their time and talent to support the PlayHouse:

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