

BOWERS MUSEUM

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Bowers Kidseum to open new exhibit
Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tet Festival

Santa Ana, CA Bowers On Saturday, May 26 Kidseum will open *Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tet Festival*, a new exhibition to promote understanding of Vietnamese culture. Children and their parents throughout the country will delight in the opportunity to discover the beauty, sights, and sounds of Vietnam through its most important celebration of the year, Tet.

Funded through a highly competitive national initiative by the Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series, and developed by Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, the *Voyage to Vietnam* exhibition is traveling to nine children's museums as part of a national tour. Through the initiative, Bowers Kidseum was selected as one of the nine museums nationally to be funded to host *Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tet Festival* for a three-month period. The Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series is funded by the Freeman Foundation, and administered by the Association of Children's Museums.

Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tet Festival showcases traditions, customs, and values exemplified by the annual celebration of Tet. Through interactive exhibits, families will immerse themselves in Vietnamese culture and gain an appreciation for the differences and similarities in the daily experiences of families of live in Vietnam.

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Visitors will be welcomed and transported to the Tet Festival in modern day Vietnam. The immersive *Marketplace* experience is the perfect place to select traditional flowers and faux food items to prepare for the celebration. Back in the *Home* section of the exhibit, families can pose for interactive family photos, dressing up in customary *Ao Dai*. Children can try on a giant *Lion Dance Mask* and engage with the parades, games, and music that allow families to share the festivities with others. It is perpetually midnight in the *Courtyard* area of the exhibit where the visitor-created *Fireworks* burst in the night sky and signal the coming of the New Year.

“The award from The Freeman Foundation made it possible for Children’s Discovery Museum to share our commitment to building global awareness and understanding with children and families throughout the U.S.,” said Children’s Discovery Museum Executive Director Marilee Jennings. “We are extremely grateful for the generosity of The Freeman Foundation and for the enthusiastic support we received from our local Vietnamese Advisory Committee members, who helped us to learn about Vietnamese culture and the importance of Tet. Their commitment to sharing their stories and traditions enabled us to create an exhibit that met the cultural goals of The Freeman Foundation, and will also capture the imagination and hearts of thousands of family visitors around the nation.”

About Bowers Kidseum

Founded in 1994, Bowers Kidseum is both an interactive children's museum and learning center, serving as an extension of the main Bowers Museum and offering multi-faceted art and cultural experiences for young children, their families, and the community. Primarily dedicated to the pre-school and early elementary age, Kidseum's central focus is providing a 'hands-on' experience in keeping with the museum's mission to "enrich lives through the world's finest arts and cultures."

Mission: Igniting Imagination through the Exploration of Art and Archaeology.

Focus: Kidseum focuses on engaging children in an academically rich and developmentally appropriate environment where they can experience history, art, and culture. As the only cultural art-based children's center in Orange County, Kidseum is on the forefront of children's art education. While focusing on the beauty and meaning behind art and traditions, the center provides children with avenues for creativity, communication, and learning. Each year, KIDSEUM engages over 35,000 Orange County children through a variety of programs, including exhibits, family festivals, museum tours, art classes, school outreach programs, cultural art trunks, creative projects, storytelling, curriculum materials and artifacts.

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About Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM)

With over 150 interactive exhibits and programs, Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) is one of the largest museums of its kind in the nation. Since opening its doors in 1990, CDM has welcomed over 7 million visitors and has offered new exhibits each year that respond to children's diverse educational needs. The striking 52,000 square foot purple building was designed by Mexico City-based architect Ricardo Legorreta and is a beacon of discovery. CDM inspires creativity, curiosity and lifelong learning through hands-on experiences inviting self-directed, open-ended exploration. For more information about the Museum, visit

www.cdm.org

About The Freeman Foundation

The Freeman Foundation was established in 1993. This private foundation is committed to increasing and strengthening the understanding of nations in East Asia. A project timeline, an executive summary of *Increasing U.S. Children and Families' Understanding of Asian Cultures: A Final Report*, and additional information about the initiative can be found on the ACM website, www.ChildrensMuseums.org under the Professional Development tab.

About Association of Children's Museums (ACM)

In an increasingly complex world, children's museums provide a place where all kids can learn through play and exploration with the caring adults in their lives. There are approximately 400 children's museums around the world, which annually reach more than thirty-one million visitors. ACM provides leadership, professional development, advocacy and resources for its member organizations and individuals. To learn more about ACM and to find an ACM-member children's museum near you, visit www.ChildrensMuseums.org.