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Stepping Stones Museum for Children Launches Summer Reading Journey and Encourages Families to Travel the World through the Magic of Reading

Norwalk, CT, June 23, 2009 – Stepping Stones Museum for Children will launch Summer Reading Journey, its first summer reading program, on Thursday, July 2 at 4 pm with local author Nora Gaydos. Gaydos has written more than 30 books including the *Now I'm Reading* series, a proven step-by-step program that guides beginning readers from their first read-along books to the excitement of independent reading.

Families will be able to take a journey together as they travel across the world through the magic of reading with Stepping Stones Summer Reading Journey. A "pilot's log" will be available for children to pick up in the museum's Resource Center and children can "take off" with a different story every day or week. Families can track the stories they read in their log books and for every ten books pre-readers and their families read together, or five books for self readers, they will receive an airplane with their name on it to add to Stepping Stones map of the world.

For every airplane, each child will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win four tickets to a Family Fun Night with upcoming characters like Winnie the Pooh. Stepping Stones storytimes and special author presentations will also count towards this program. The journey will run from July 2 through August 23 with a special awards ceremony on August 27. Every child who participates in the program will be honored at this special awards ceremony beginning at 5 pm.

"In an effort to promote a love of reading, coupled with the development of early literacy skills, we are thrilled to launch this new summer reading program," said Hyla Crane, director of education at Stepping Stones. "We look forward to families joining us on this fun reading journey."

Local author Alyssa Satin Capucilli will read from her collection of Biscuit books on Saturday, August 1 at 11 am. Children will be able to meet both Biscuit and his creator during this special presentation. On Thursday, August 27, the museum is open for free from 5 to 8 pm. Local author and illustrator Jamison Odone will capture every child's imagination beginning at 6 pm with his book *Honey Badgers* as he shows that stories are brought to life with both illustrations and words.

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Stepping Stones features storytimes regularly throughout the week. Toddler Tales are held on Wednesdays at 9:45 and 10:15 am in English and in Spanish on Wednesdays at 10:45 am. Resource Center Reads is held on Thursdays at 4 pm. There is also storytelling every Saturday and times vary.

Stepping Stones Museum for Children, a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization, is an award-winning children's museum committed to broadening and enriching the lives of children. Museum exhibits, educational programs and special events complement efforts in schools, childcare centers and homes. With four main galleries, a toddlers-only gallery and more than 100 hands-on activities, Stepping Stones offers children ten and under plenty to explore and discover.

Stepping Stones Museum for Children is located at 303 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT, exit 14 North and 15 South off I-95. From July 1 through Labor Day, the museum is open daily from 10 am – 5 pm. The museum will close at 3 pm on Saturday, July 4. Admission is \$9 and children under 1 are free. To learn more, visit steppingstonesmuseum.org.

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