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Gala Event at Stepping Stones Museum for Children Raises over \$610,000 for Expansion and Honors Recipients of its Stepping Up for Children Awards

Norwalk, CT, May 6, 2010 – Stepping Stones hosted *The Kaleidoscope Ball: Ten Years and Growing* on Saturday, May 1 which successfully raised over \$610,000 for the museum’s current expansion. More than 420 guests from throughout Fairfield and Westchester counties, and New York City, attended the gala held at the museum in Norwalk’s Mathews Park. The evening featured cocktails in the museum’s Celebration Courtyard, the Stepping Up for Children awards presentation, dinner, dancing, and a live auction. The Gala event was orchestrated by Jeff Arsenault of Stamford, Dionna Carlson of New Canaan and Jeff Kaplan of Wilton, who served as co-chairs of the event.

“We are so grateful to all of our gala guests and sponsors for supporting Stepping Stones and recognizing the importance of our expansion as essential to the advancement of a greater community,” said Rhonda Kiest, executive director of Stepping Stones. “The funds raised at The Kaleidoscope Ball bring us one step closer to reaching our \$17 million goal for our expansion and to building an extraordinary future for children.”

The Kaleidoscope Ball is part of a series of celebrations for Stepping Stones 10th birthday that began in March and will culminate with the opening of the newly expanded museum on November 20. The \$17 million “green” expansion will include the addition of 22,000 square providing new exhibits and innovative programming. Additions include a multi-media gallery, an expanded infant and toddler area, art and science labs, a traveling exhibit gallery, an expanded café and Community Garden. The expanded facility will be Gold LEED Certified and include solar panels, a wind turbine, a green-planted roof and Community Garden, making the museum itself an important energy teaching tool.

During the evening, the museum also presented its prestigious *Stepping Up for Children Awards*. The awards recognize exemplary leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to improving and enriching the lives of children and families. The awards were proudly presented to Laura Lee Simon, the Rainforest Alliance and the Newman’s Own Foundation at this year’s *Kaleidoscope Ball*.

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About the Stepping Up for Children honorees:

Laura Lee Simon

A lifelong advocate for children, Laura Lee Simon has had a tremendous impact on shaping the programs and policies that serve and protect the interests of children and families. Laura Lee has forged strong, lasting relationships between coalitions from diverse disciplines and sectors of society to promote social change in fields that include education, health, child care, child welfare and intercommunity relations.

Currently Trustee Emerita of the Connecticut Public Broadcasting, Laura Lee was the first female chair of its Board and the driving force behind the first state budget for children in Connecticut, the first budget of its kind in the country. Laura Lee is a founding member of the Connecticut Commission on Children and served as its chair for ten years. As Chair Emerita, Laura Lee now chairs the Commission's Embedding Prevention Task Force, the multimedia public education campaign "Kids for Connecticut," and she is a member of the executive committee. Laura Lee also serves as the vice president of the Connecticut Association for Human Services and is founder and honorary member of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition. She lends her considerable expertise to Stepping Stones as chair of our Community Partnership Council.

Rainforest Alliance

Working in more than 70 countries around the world, the Rainforest Alliance believes that it is possible to create a sustainable society, one that protects the planet and provides sustainable livelihoods for its people. They promote standards for sustainability that conserve wildlife and wild lands, and ensure the well-being of workers and their communities.

The Rainforest Alliance actively engages children and teachers in this important work through the creation and facilitation of curriculum designed to foster global citizenship and a healthy respect for the environment. These programs help children develop an understanding of current conservation challenges, cultural differences and the wise use of resources. A longstanding partner of Stepping Stones, the Rainforest Alliance has served children locally as a significant content partner of the museum's Rainforest Adventure exhibit and the new Global Connections: A Rainforest Adventure project.

Newman's Own Foundation

Newman's Own Foundation advances founder Paul Newman's philanthropic legacy by donating all of the net royalties and profits it receives from the sale of Newman's Own products to thousands of charities throughout the world. Paul believed that giving back to others is the highest form of citizenship and that philanthropy is a powerful means for making the world a better place.

Newman's Own Foundation is committed to the pursuit of the common good; a vision of a world where need is viewed as an opportunity to make a difference. The Foundation honors Paul's giving philosophy by supporting causes that make a difference and span the wide and diverse spectrum of human need – health, education, environment, poverty, human services, community and economic development, and the arts. Stepping Stones has benefited greatly from the generosity of Newman's Own Foundation. Their support of Healthy Children, Healthy Communities, and specifically the Healthyville and Conservation Quest exhibits, has enabled the museum to provide high quality, enriching learning experiences for hundreds of thousands of children locally, throughout Connecticut and the country.

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Sponsors for *The Kaleidoscope Ball: Ten Years and Growing* included: Beinfield Pappajohn & Cavello, CL&P, Diageo, The Foster Family Fund, GE Capital, General Re Corporation, Guy Carpenter & Company, LLC, Keno Graphic Services, McCann Systems LLC, Moffly Media, Nestlé Waters North America, Newman's Own, NovaFund Advisors, LLC, People's United Bank, Pepperidge Farm, Inc., Pitney Bowes Inc., U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management and Xerox.

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. With four main galleries, a toddlers-only gallery, a new outdoor play space and more than 100 hands-on activities, Stepping Stones offers children ten and under plenty to explore and discover. Museum exhibits, educational programs and special events complement efforts in schools, childcare centers and homes. In 2010, Stepping Stones is commemorating its 10th birthday with a year of celebrations, surprises and special events. Stepping Stones will celebrate the opening of its 22,000 square foot "green" expansion in November 2010, providing new exhibits and innovative programming.

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