Dear Friends,

It’s Because of You. As we reflect on the past year, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the incredible support you’ve offered Pretend City Children’s Museum. Our City is a welcoming place where families learn about important child development milestones and early learning, and children grow in myriad ways as they explore the museum with joy and curiosity. Your involvement as a member, volunteer, community or corporate partner, or donor, has been a driving force behind every success, every milestone, and every positive change we achieved in 2023.

Because of You, lives have been transformed. Your generosity has allowed us to provide families with developmental resources as well as guidance for parents and other caregivers to be their very best. We’ve provided learning spaces that are designed to help develop skills needed to prepare children for school readiness and a lifetime of success and wellbeing. Because of You, we’ve expanded initiatives that promote inclusivity, diversity, and acceptance. The ripple effect of your involvement has created a wave of positivity, impacting not only Orange County families, but also our thousands of guests who travel from across the country and internationally to experience all that Pretend City is.

Because of You, progress has prevailed. Your commitment to our mission has been the catalyst for innovation and growth. This has allowed us to adapt, evolve, and continue making a meaningful difference based on our community’s needs. We continually evaluate our programming for our youngest Pretend City citizens to ensure an impactful learning and growth experience. We’ve found valuable ways in which we can provide support for their families.

Our 2023 year in review serves as a testament to the collective power of You - caring individuals who believe in our children’s potential and wellbeing. As our plans take shape for Pretend City to grow into Orange County’s premier hub of early childhood education at the Great Park in Irvine, you’re helping to create the success stories that will be told in the future. But for now, as we look at what we did together in 2023, we are inspired by your gifts of time, talent and treasure and look to the future with optimism, knowing that Because of You we will continue to offer a unique and quality early learning experience to our community’s youngest citizens.

With gratitude,

Erin Boyl
Chair, Board of Directors
Our dedicated 2023 Board of Directors provides guidance and leadership, serve as ambassadors, and make generous financial commitments to help advance our mission. Their commitment to excellence helps to ensure a positive experience, each and everyday, for our member families and other young visitors.

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Because of You...

197,700 guests counted on Pretend City to engage their curiosities and imaginations through art, dramatic play, and rich educational learning experiences.
Because of You...

3,600 guests participated in Neurodivergent Family Nights

Our free events give parents and children a session in a special sensory-friendly environment, to explore the City while hosting a supportive hub of families experiencing similar situations.

Pretend City's trained professionals support families with access to community partners and guidance during their play time.

“This week we went to @pretendcity for their Neurodivergent Night. I had no intention of staying the full two hours, thought for sure Silas would be too young to enjoy it. But he explored the entire place for the full two hours and could've easily stayed to play longer! 10/10 would recommend!”

-Grateful Pretend City Guest
Because of You...

1,300 Children Received Developmental Screenings

“As a first-time parent, this program helped me understand the milestones my son should be achieving; we are grateful for the opportunity to participate, receive educational tips and feel part of the museum.”

Our free screenings pinpoint developmental progress in the areas of communication, gross motor and fine motor skills, problem solving, and personal-social skills.
Because of You...

63,600 guests visited
Camping in the City –
A Trek through our Wilderness Park

Our summer learning space focused upon Conservation, Respect for Eco-Systems, and Nature’s Impact on wellbeing, while families bonded through fun STEM activities. This experience featured hiking trails and animal prints to track, a fishing pond, a campsite to pitch a tent and a campfire to sit around and share stories.

A post-survey shared the top four reasons guests loved Camping in the City:

• I was inspired to spend time with my family in the outdoors
• I took care of the environment by reducing my waste
• I liked practicing for my outdoor adventures in a safe space
• I played more zero-energy games with my family and friends

A special thanks to our Sponsors:
Frank’s Irvine Subaru, Off the Grid Rentals, Applied Medical, Orange County Power Authority, PwC, Modern Woodmen, The Lotts Agency
Because of You...

Pretend City celebrated 14 years in Irvine!

Since our opening in 2009, we have served over 2.2 million guests and counting.

Our birthday party was a “WILD” celebration with bugs, amphibians, and reptiles!
Because of You…

250 community and cultural partners enhanced programming

Pretend City is a welcoming place for all our community members. Our Home and Café learning spaces, along with our Cooking in the City program, are dedicated to representing the many cultures of our visitors.

Every day families learn about our world through storytimes and interactive programming.

This year, we transformed our Café into Marukome Japanese Cuisine (above) and changed out our Home to feature the Tongan and Samoan heritage of the Fifita-Talavou Family. (right).
Because of You...

Pretend City became the first Orange County city to proclaim Hunger Action Month in September with mayor of the day, Cora, one of our frequent member visitors.

Storytime taught children about hunger and food insecurity. Families packed apples with Second Harvest, our new partner.
Because of You…

Pretend City celebrated the Grand Reopening of the Subaru Service Center in November 2023, made possible through their Share the Love program.

This busy learning space in the City showcases just one of the many career opportunities a little one might imagine in their future.

“Thank you to all the parents and grandparents that visit Pretend City with their kids. Here they get to explore many career opportunities.

Maybe the new Frank’s Irvine Subaru Service Center will help kids to find their specialization and the automotive industry will be in their future.”

Sergio Sanchez
Owner, Irvine Subaru
Because of You...

We welcomed 750 volunteers who provided 5,700 hours of their time and talents to advance our mission. As the backbone of our organization, our volunteers demonstrated a sense of belonging and purpose as a Pretend City citizen.
Because of You…

PNC supported Pretend City with a generous **grant** to partner with MOMS OC, Orangewood Foundation, and Inland Empire families, to receive monthly early childhood development classes, transportation, and museum membership.

Additionally, **PNC’s Grow Up Great initiative brought their traveling Mobile Learning Adventure** exhibit to the City. Children and families enjoyed a free early learning and play program as part of PNC’s community outreach and dedicated philanthropic mission.

“At PNC, we know that parent and caregiver engagement in early learning and development provides children with a strong foundation for success.

“For nearly 20 years, PNC has supported early childhood education through our PNC Grow Up Great initiative. We are thrilled to partner with Pretend City and in community events in support of young learners and their families.”

Denise Scott, client & community relations director, PNC Bank
Because of You...

_Pretend City_ ensured that _every member_ of our community _had access_ to the _joy of learning_ at Pretend City.

Our _Welcome Families_ program distributed **7,840 tickets**, to **14 nonprofit partners**, a gift of over $156,000. These organizations focus on serving young children experiencing challenging circumstances.

Our _Museums for All_ and _Military Families_ discounts have afforded **13,150 guests** a Pretend City experience, a gift of $176,000.

We hosted **18 Title 1 School Field Trips** at _no cost_ for **948 students**.
Because of You…

1,778 families participated in Baby Steps

Pretend City supports parents of birth to 18-month old babies by teaching them about their child's developmental milestones and engaging them in appropriate activities and learning.

“The magic in early education is not only for the children but also for us parents. We have witnessed our children develop and been able to connect with them more. We have also been able to connect with other parents in this magical world.”
Because of You...

Pretend City celebrated an abundance of cultural celebrations and holidays with our diverse families visiting from across the region, country and internationally.

Children and families expanded their world views and understanding of the varying and wonderful ways that families express themselves.

Pretend City is truly a welcoming place for all.
We are grateful

Investing in the healthy development of our children benefits all of us. We could not accomplish our mission without the generosity, involvement, and enthusiasm of our 2023 supporters. We thank each and every one of you for partnering with us to bring a unique and quality learning experience to our community's young children.

Our community of supporters is growing! We acknowledge and thank those who are first time donors as noted with a !

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Thank you!

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This report acknowledges donors who contributed between January 1 – December 31, 2023. Every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of your name. If your name has been misspelled, omitted, or listed improperly, please accept our apology and contact Madelyn Garcia at 949-428-3900, ext. 212 or Madelyn.Garcia@pretendcity.org so that we may correct our records.
Early Childhood Learning

A smart Investment

Revenue - $5,357,520.79

- Admissions: 38%
- Memberships: 13%
- Field Trips: 1%
- Retail: 1%
- Birthday & Rentals: 2%
- Contributions*: 43%
- Other: 2%

Expenses - $3,639,051.12

- Programming: 50%
- Occupancy: 19%
- Marketing: 8%
- Fundraising: 13%
- Administrative: 10%

* Includes individual, grant, and events gross revenue, and capital pledge payments

NOTE: Based on unaudited financials and does not include in kind services or depreciation expense.
Pretend City is an early childhood development hub where kids and families unite in boundless fun and joy – all while propelling our youngest citizens into a successful life-long journey of learning.

Thank you for your generosity to Pretend City and your dedicated belief and investment in our children and their future.