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THE HEALTH ADVENTURE ANNOUNCES ITS PATH TO A NEW ADVENTURE

ASHEVILLE – The Health Adventure has always been known for its innovation, and its popularity is evident: since beginning almost 40 years ago in a broom closet at Mission Hospital, the organization has relocated to larger facilities five times.

Now it will finally have a home of its own.

The Health Adventure, Asheville's Family Health and Science Attraction, unveiled its plans today for a new indoor and outdoor health and science park located just one mile from downtown on its own land. This announcement kicked off the public portion of the \$25 million capital campaign, of which \$10.5 million has already been secured through private, foundation, and government funding.

Once complete, The Health Adventure will move to its new permanent home and become an attraction known as Momentum: Science and Health Adventure Park.

"The Health Adventure will remain open while we work toward building an environmentally friendly home of our own," said President & CEO Paige Johnson. "We look forward to celebrating important milestones at The Health Adventure with the community, and love this project as an expansion of our mission."

"While Momentum will be a unique, first-of-its-kind attraction, it is infused with the same spirit and dedication that has made The Health Adventure a valued community center of engagement for nearly four decades."

Celebrations in the coming year at The Health Adventure include a family friendly kick-off 40th Birthday Party on New Year's Eve, a time capsule to be opened at Momentum in the year 2048 when the organization celebrates its 80th birthday, and a special Halloween Birthday Party to honor the museum's iconic Mr. Bones and TAM as they turn 30 in 2008.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project will be located on 10 acres of land that The Health Adventure currently owns along the Reed Creek Greenway near the Botanical Gardens at Asheville at UNCA on Broadway Avenue.

In keeping with its history as an internationally acclaimed center for health and science education and experiential learning and play, Momentum will expand The Health Adventure's current mission to include environmental science. PGAV Destination Consulting, the world-renowned St. Louis-based company responsible for the successful and innovative design behind Discovery Cove, Busch Gardens, and exhibits at the Georgia Aquarium, created Momentum's design and concept alongside key staff and volunteers.

The attention to detail and experience PGAV has as a leading destination planning company is evidenced by the more than 40 million guests who enjoy the experiences created by PGAV each year.

And while Momentum will be physically located in Asheville, it will have regional and national significance as a model center of community engagement and enrichment.

“One of the key elements in our relocation is to emphasize our mission of including environmental education,” said Johnson. “As we move forward with our project, green building principles will be an important focus and will continue to evolve.”

“Our health and wellness are intimately linked to the health of the planet,” said Joe Brumit, Chair of The Health Adventure’s Board of Directors. “This new indoor and outdoor attraction is the next phase in an organization that has served children, families and seniors since 1968.

“We know now that our lifestyles and the choices we make about how we take care of ourselves impacts the health of the environment. Likewise, the health of the planet impacts our individual and global wellbeing. Momentum will continue The Health Adventure’s mission to improve health awareness, promote wellness lifestyles, and increase science literacy. We aren’t changing our mission, we’re expanding it,” he said.

Iconic attraction elements at Momentum will include:

An environmentally friendly campus with unique indoor and outdoor exhibits and walking trails nestled amid 10 acres.

A 34,000-square-foot facility offering healthy food service, a large changing exhibits gallery, and quality health and science exhibits that spark imagination and positive transformation.

America's Greatest Tree House: Guests will enjoy endless opportunities for climbing, sliding, and exploration. Containing a classroom, the tree house will teach valuable lessons about the importance of trees to a healthy environment.

Pedal-Powered Monorail: The only one of its kind in North America, guests will pedal the monorail car through an exciting journey through the treetops. What better way to explore the new site while discovering that exercise is fun?!

Emergency 911: Guests will practice problem-solving skills required by a medical team in this ambulance simulation. Visitors will treat “patients” and learn that the hospital is not a scary place.

Adventure Café: With an outdoor deck and fun scientific collections, Adventure Cafe will provide healthy food options and an engaging dining experience.

Amphitheater & Gardens: Blending beautifully with the natural landscape, the amphitheater will provide an outdoor performance and teaching space. A children's garden will give adventurers the chance to explore the natural world in a safe environment.

Adventure Playspace: Smaller adventurers will have an area designed just for them, similar to the popular "Creative Play Space" in the current facility. Children five and under will find endless opportunities to role-play, imagine, and discover new skills.

Contraptions: Adventurers will learn problem-solving skills that allow them to create their own inventions in this large exhibit hall of gadgets.

Expanded wellness and science programs and greater teaching space including indoor and outdoor classrooms and learning labs.

Green building principles will guide all phases of construction. Momentum will include permeable paving in the parking lot to help filter storm water runoff from the surrounding neighborhood and a constructed wetland to further filter the storm water runoff before it enters Reed Creek. The building itself will utilize green building principles to maximize its natural heating, cooling and air flow capacity, and construction will seek to impact the land as lightly as possible. Invasive species will be replaced with native species.

The Health Adventure has a 40-year history of being a good community partner, and Momentum will maintain and expand upon that tradition. Strategic placement of outdoor exhibits will utilize the building as a sound barrier. Dark sky lighting will be used throughout the property to minimize community impact and light pollution.

HISTORY

It all started in a broom closet at Memorial Mission Hospital.

Founded in 1968 by the Buncombe County Medical Society Auxiliary – also known as our Founding Mothers – The Health Adventure was one of the first health education centers of its kind in the country. The museum gained national and international recognition for its excellence in health and science education, featuring a hands-on, interactive approach that utilizes dynamic exhibits and programs to teach school and community groups.

The Health Adventure's innovative approach to health and science education has won the minds – and hearts – of generations from Asheville and the region. People who visited the museum as children now bring their own families, and others have joined The Health Adventure family as volunteers, staff members, supporters and treasured friends.

The museum's first location was a small storage room at Memorial Mission Hospital, and its primary focus at that time was to reduce children's fear of hospital settings. As its programs grew, the facility moved to an abandoned gymnasium at the hospital only to expand again four years later to a log cabin on site.

In 1978, the museum relocated to a larger space in the Mountain Area Health Education Center – quite a leap for an organization staffed by volunteers. Richard Rush Studios of Chicago created hands-on exhibits to fit the museum's design and mission and the first paid executive director was hired.

The museum grew steadily and moved into the Pack Place Education, Arts and Science Center in 1992. The new site provided a 300 percent increase in teaching and exhibit space and was open for walk-in visits by the public. Programs were expanded and science exhibits were developed to encourage adults, families and tourists to explore self-instructional exhibits. Workshops, lectures, traveling exhibits and special events were also created to complement the museum's exhibits.

Today, as a regional health and science education center, The Health Adventure is dedicated to improving health and science literacy among children and adults. A broad mosaic of programs includes topics such as peer pressure, substance abuse, mathematics, physics, human sexuality, AIDS, nutrition, exercise, bones, senses, DNA, lasers, biology and much more. Adult program topics include information about cholesterol, arthritis, allergies, humor and memory. School programs are integrated with state health and science curriculum guidelines in order to be an extension of the classroom. The programs have been highly effective and successful, which is reflected by the fact that the organization has served more than 1.6 million visitors during its nearly 40 years.

Accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1985, The Health Adventure is also a member of the Association of Science and Technology Centers, the NC Museums Council, and the Southeastern Museums Conference.

PATH TO A NEW ADVENTURE

The decision to find a new home – one The Health Adventure could call its own – did not happen overnight. In fact, it took more than 10 years of community charettes and focus groups before The Health Adventure decided to launch its public portion of the capital campaign for Momentum.

In 1996, The Health Adventure’s Board of Directors appointed an ad-hoc committee to assess facility needs for its current and future operations. During this time, the organization broadened its vision for its role as a center of community engagement in the region. In 2001, The Health Adventure articulated its role with the vision statement: “Improved lives through the exploration of the amazing world within and around us.”

It took seven years of focus groups, community input sessions, and planning meetings to decide to take the next step – something The Health Adventure is calling its “Path to a New Adventure.”

“The Health Adventure has always been known for innovation and growth to serve the needs of our community through unique and effective programs, exhibits and outreach efforts that seek to improve lives,” said Johnson. “But we’re also known for the care and concern we take to be a good partner within our community and the region, and that’s why it was so important for us to do our homework and make sure that our new home would meet the needs of the community.”

One of the criteria for this new home was to purchase land so The Health Adventure’s next move – its sixth move in 40 years – would provide the organization with a chance to have both indoor and outdoor exhibits and programs on a campus with room to grow.

“We looked at more than 30 properties,” said Pam Turner, longtime volunteer, Board member, past Board President, and Capital Campaign Co-Chair. “We took our time, did our research, and ultimately decided on a nearly 10-acre piece of land on Broadway.”

The Health Adventure purchased the land at a discounted price from Carl Ricker, who saved the organization more \$300,000 on the cost of the land.

“The property is perfect for us,” Turner said. “We are grateful to Mr. Ricker’s generosity. It’s only one mile from downtown Asheville, we’re along the Reed Creek Greenway, and we’ll be neighbors with UNCA and the Asheville Botanical Gardens.”

The project’s architects, PGAV, created a facility design that complements the site, which means that the land will be impacted as lightly as possible. “The Health Adventure has a special place in our hearts,” said Vice President Mike Konzen, “and we took great care to make sure Momentum’s design respects the qualities that makes the organization and the city it flourished in so vibrant and unique.”

The primary ingredients essential for Momentum’s success, according to Konzen, include “that special blend of wonder, self-discovery, and personal warmth that makes transformational experiences possible.

“The Health Adventure has always been more than just a place to visit. For nearly 40 years it has helped people live better lives, and Momentum will continue that tradition through a unique experiential indoor and outdoor environment. We are proud to be helping this wonderful organization establish its first permanent home,” he said.

The Health Adventure’s homework over the past 10 years also included numerous community charettes and

committees made up of staff and diverse volunteers from the region, market testing and focus groups, economic impact studies, intercept surveys, traffic impact studies, environmental impact studies, community meetings, land surveys. Capacity-building efforts to strengthen partnerships and forge new ones, as well as an intensive “silent phase” of campaign fundraising also were part of The Health Adventure’s decade-long planning process.

“I am proud to say that we have raised more than \$10 million in funding toward our \$25 million goal, and that’s before we decided to go public with the campaign,” said Founding Mother, Board member, and Capital Campaign Co-Chair Diana Bilbrey.

HOW TO JOIN THE NEW ADVENTURE

For gift recognition opportunities or more information about the project in general, visit www.getmofromlife.com or contact Paige Johnson, President & CEO, at (828) 254-6373, Ext. 311.

For community relations opportunities, concerns, construction updates or other issues, contact communityaccess@thehealthadventure.org

The Health Adventure, founded in 1968, is a nonprofit family health and science attraction for today’s families with a mission to improve health awareness, promote wellness lifestyles, and increase science literacy through programs and exhibits. For more information, call (828) 254-6373 or visit www.thehealthadventure.org.

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