



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children Announced as a
2016 Recipient of Nation's Highest Museum and Library Honor**
*National Medal for Museum and Library Service Recognizes Gulfport, MS
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center's Community Contributions*

GULFPORT (April 19, 2016) – The Institute of Museum and Library Services today announced Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children of Gulfport, MS, as one of 10 recipients of the 2016 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to the community. For 22 years, the award has celebrated institutions that respond to societal needs in innovative ways, making a difference for individuals, families, and their communities. The award will be presented at an event in Washington, D.C., on June 1.

Opening its bright blue doors in 1998, Mississippi's first children's museum, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children, has been dedicated to expanding a child's world through shared learning experiences that enrich the minds and hearts of children, families and communities with quality arts education, innovative programming and fun interactive exhibits.

This year's National Medal recipients show the transforming role of museums and libraries from educational destinations to full-fledged community partners and anchors," said Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. "We are proud to recognize the extraordinary institutions that play an essential role in reaching underserved populations and catalyzing new opportunities for active local involvement."

"The shouts and giggles we hear every day are confirmation enough for us, but it sure doesn't hurt to hear that we have been selected as a national winner in recognition of exceptional service to our community," said Cindy DeFrances, executive director of Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children. "Our visitors know that we offer an experience like no other children's museum in Mississippi or along the Coast, one where we inspire children, families and communities through interactive educational experiences and exploration. At the center, a child can participate in activities as varied as spotting a lion from a safari jeep in Africa to climbing into a tree house in the oaks."

Community member Brandon Spann, a 17-year old senior at Gulfport High School, will join DeFrances in Washington, D.C., for the June event to share the impact Lynn Meadows Discovery Center and the WINGS Performing Arts program has had on his life.

The recipients of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service demonstrate impactful programs and services that exceed the expected levels of community outreach. They were selected from 30 finalists from across the country nominated for the honor.

"This is a well-deserved honor for the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center. This museum serves as a valuable community resource in Gulfport and throughout South Mississippi," said Senator Thad Cochran, who recommended the Gulfport museum for the award. "I hope this award will fuel the museum's drive to continue to inspire and educate young people on the Gulf Coast for many more years."



“Since 1998, children and families across the Gulf Coast have benefited immensely from the educational opportunities provided at Lynn Meadows Discovery Center,” Senator Roger Wicker said. “Even Hurricane Katrina could not stop this dynamic museum from giving young students a place to learn, thrive, and create. Congratulations to the leaders and staff who have earned this highly sought national recognition.”

After the ceremony, StoryCorps—a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—will visit Lynn Meadows Discovery Center to document stories from the community.

For a complete list of 2016 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal winners, please visit <https://www.ims.gov/2016-medals>.

About Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children

Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) children’s museum in Gulfport, Mississippi. The first children’s museum in the State of Mississippi, the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children is dedicated to inspiring children, families and communities through interactive educational experiences and exploration. We strive to instill a lifelong love of learning through laughter and play. For more details about Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for Children’s program and events, please visit www.lmdc.org

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s [123,000 libraries](#) and [35,000 museums](#). Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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