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Brooklyn Children's Museum Awarded \$2.5 Million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to Launch New Character Education Initiative

(Brooklyn, NY)— [Brooklyn Children's Museum](#) (BCM) has received a \$2.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to support the development and implementation of **Brooklyn Character**, a new initiative designed to promote the understanding, development, and retention of key character strengths among children ages 5–12 and their caregivers as part of *Brooklyn Time Machine*, a new permanent exhibit set to open in 2027.

With a focus on the four traits of Adaptability, Courage, Neighborliness, and Perseverance, the initiative is being funded through Fostering Character Through Children's Museums, a Lilly Endowment initiative designed to help children's museums develop new or expand existing efforts that explore and encourage the development of positive character traits among children and youth. Brooklyn Children's Museum is one of 23 children's museums around the nation being funded through this initiative.

Each aspect of **Brooklyn Character** —from the stories and exemplary figures featured, to its prompts and activities, to the four focal character strengths themselves—draws from Brooklyn's incredible history, landscape, and community. Through its distinctive place-based approach, BCM will create character education programs that reflect, resonate with, and inspire its community, promoting character development in a new generation.

BCM's **Brooklyn Character** will encompass:

- *Brooklyn Time Machine* – a new permanent exhibit promoting children's understanding of character strengths through stories and interactives rooted in Brooklyn's history and figures.
- *In Character* – a new public series co-produced with a local theater troupe to feature live, interactive performances of historic Brooklynites who exemplify key traits.
- *Built on Character* – a school program that will include take-home kits that reinforce classroom learning and extend character education into the home.
- *Character for Caregivers* – a suite of resources supporting caregiver character development, including expert-led seminars, weekly email newsletters, and printed guides.

The development of **Brooklyn Character** will be led in collaboration with Dr. Arthur Schwartz, President and Chief Executive Officer of Character.org, and the Museum aims to launch its full suite of offerings in January 2027.

“This initiative allows us to leverage Brooklyn’s rich stories, cultures, and history to nurture the character qualities that will help children and families thrive across their lifetimes,” said **Atiba T. Edwards, President and CEO of Brooklyn Children’s Museum**. “*Brooklyn Time Machine* will tell centuries of Brooklyn’s history in an immersive and hands-on approach. We are profoundly grateful for this generous support from Lilly Endowment and excited to help our borough’s wonderful families cultivate their innate strengths and capacities, learn from all that Brooklyn has to offer, and build a strong, enduring community together.”

“Children’s museums are places where children of all ages can learn informally, discovering new ideas through play, multi-sensory experiences and self-expression,” said **Ted Maple, Lilly Endowment’s Vice President for Education and Youth Programs**. “We are excited to see how the museums funded through this initiative will help children and their families to explore various character traits and reflect together on ways these traits can be practiced and strengthened.”

About Brooklyn Children’s Museum

Inspired by the energy and diversity of our borough, Brooklyn Children’s Museum creates experiences that ignite curiosity, celebrate identity and cultivate joyful learning. Founded in 1899 as the world’s first children’s museum, Brooklyn Children’s Museum is New York City’s largest cultural institution designed especially for families. Proudly based in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, BCM serves 300,000 children and caregivers annually with exhibits and programs grounded in visual arts, music and performance, natural science, and world cultures. For more information, visit: www.brooklynkids.org.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) is an Indianapolis-based, private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly and his sons, Eli and J.K. Jr., through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although gifts of stock remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. The Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion.

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