



Contact: Maureen P. Mangan  
Direct Line: 1-516-224-5828

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## **Beloved #1 Blue Engine Returns to Long Island Children's Museum**

### **All Aboard for *Thomas & Friends*<sup>™</sup>: *Explore the Rails! Fun***

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**GARDEN CITY, NY** – All aboard! The world's most beloved #1 blue engine rolls into **Long Island Children's Museum** for exciting fun and summer adventures. *Thomas & Friends*<sup>™</sup>: *Explore the Rails!*, an interactive exhibit created by Minnesota Children's Museum and inspired by the popular children's series seen on Cartoon Network, steams into LICM on Saturday, May 25, 2024. Visitors will have a chance to visit Sodor Island through Sunday, September 8.

Featuring the favorite engines and destinations from *Thomas & Friends*<sup>™</sup>, the STEM- (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) focused exhibit engages children, ages 2 through 7, and families in foundational skills that foster STEM literacy. The hands-on exhibit incorporates STEM practices that encourage thinking mathematically, making comparisons, experimenting to solve problems using a variety of methods and tools, thinking creatively and reflecting on actions and results.

"Long Island Children's Museum had opened the "Thomas & Friends<sup>™</sup> traveling exhibit in early 2020 to great audience reaction," explains LICM President Erika S. Floreska. "Then COVID happened and the Museum shut down. The exhibit sat in our empty building for months, anticipating the return of visitors. By the time LICM was able to reopen, the exhibit had to move on to its next scheduled destination," she added. Floreska notes that a top priority for the Museum was getting the popular exhibit back as soon as its traveling schedule allowed to meet audience demand. "Now we can finally say 'All Aboard' and provide visitors with plenty of interactive learning experiences that align with our commitment to provide foundational STEM learning that can inspire the net generation of scientists, engineers and physicists."

Visitors to the exhibit will find themselves surrounded by the Island of Sodor's iconic locations: Knapford Station, Sodor Steamworks and much more. In the exhibit, children help Thomas and his friends solve a variety of challenges, from a simple sorting and shape identification activity to more complex engineering obstacles, such as completing a train track using track pieces with different levels of elevation. As children encounter new challenges and test their abilities, the smiling faces of Thomas, Percy, Victor and

others are there to offer encouragement and remind children how “really useful” they are.

### **Inside the Exhibit:**

- Climb into Thomas’ cab and explore the engine’s inner workings. Flip levers and investigate other movable parts that trigger train noises such as braking, whistles and steam.
- Fix Percy’s wobbly wheel by removing and replacing parts and experimenting to find a combination of wheels, rods and bolts that work.
- Explore the favorite Island of Sodor destinations including: Tidmouth Sheds, Brendam Docks and the Sodor Search & Rescue Station on an over-sized Thomas Wooden Railway train table.
- Work with old and new friends loading luggage, livestock and other freight into the coaches of two train cars.
- Collaborate with others to get Percy moving by loading coal into his coal box and filling his tank with water from a water tower.
- Suit up as the conductor to exchange money and sell tickets to other visitors taking a ride on the train.
- Wander through a Thomas & Friends retrospective featuring model engines from the original live action series produced in London, copies of the original drawings and 75 manuscripts from the Rev. W. Awdry, the creator of Thomas & Friends, and a collection of memorabilia documenting the history and evolution of Thomas & Friends through books, television, and toys.

Throughout the exhibit’s four-month stay, LICM will offer a variety of public programs to complement the exhibit experience.

The Thomas & Friends exhibit was designed and developed by Minnesota Children’s Museum in partnership with Mattel, Inc. Fisher-Price, the leading manufacturer of infant and preschool toys, is the presenting sponsor for the exhibit. The exhibit is sponsored local by People’s United Bank. For information about the *Thomas & Friends: Explore the Rails!* tour, visit: [www.thomasandfriends.com/en-us/events](http://www.thomasandfriends.com/en-us/events).

### **About the Long Island Children’s Museum ([www.licm.org](http://www.licm.org))**

The mission of Long Island Children’s Museum (LICM) is to connect all our communities’ children, and those who care for them, to a life of wonder, imagination and exploration. At LICM, children discover their passions and their relationship to the world we share.

The 40,000-square-foot museum serves over 300,000 children and adults annually. The private, not-for-profit institution chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, offers museum-based educational programs and cultural experiences, as well as an extensive community outreach program offered in schools, libraries and youth centers across Long Island. Additionally, the Children's Museum operates the historic Nunley's Carousel in association with Nassau County, one of three intact Stein & Goldstein carousels still in existence.

Recognized with several honors, including the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), LICM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the gold standard of museum excellence. It is currently the only accredited children's museum in New York State and is one of only 16 accredited children's museums nationwide. LICM has earned 4-stars on Charity Navigator and has Platinum Transparency on Candid.

### **About Thomas & Friends®**

Thomas the Tank Engine™ was created over 70 years ago, by a British clergyman, the Rev W Awdry, as a storybook for his son. That story quickly grew to become the award-winning #1 preschool train brand franchise it is today, enjoyed by families in more than 160 territories and over 55 languages across multiple touch-points and formats, including: 500+ original TV shows; 12 feature-length films; selling 1 engine every second; apps; toys; consumer products; publishing; live attractions and much more. Thomas & Friends is viewable on more than 30 world-class broadcasters including Nick Jr. in the US, Super RTL in Germany, and on Five's Milkshake! in the UK. Thomas & Friends can also be viewed across digital platforms including Hulu, iTunes, YouTube and more. On YouTube, the Thomas & Friends channel has had over 1.16 billion lifetime views, over 909k subscribers and 2.6MM engagements. For more information about the world of Thomas & Friends, please visit [www.thomasandfriends.com](http://www.thomasandfriends.com) and [facebook.com/thomasandfriends](https://facebook.com/thomasandfriends)

### **About Minnesota Children's Museum**

As the nation's leading developer of traveling children's museum exhibits, the Minnesota Children's Museum is a trailblazer in creating immersive learning environments, reaching more than 15 million children and adults in the United States, Canada and Mexico through the nation's largest collection of children's traveling exhibits. The Museum is consistently rates as one of the top children's museums in the country by national media outlets like *Forbes* and *Parents* and was recently names as a finalist for an Institute of Museum and Library Services Medal of Service, the nation's highest honor conferred on museums and libraries.

## **About Mattel**

Mattel is a global learning, development and play company that inspires the next generation of kids to shape a brighter tomorrow. Through our portfolio of iconic consumer brands, including American Girl®, Barbie®, Fisher-Price®, Hot Wheels® and Thomas & Friends®, we create systems of play, content and experiences that help kids unlock their full potential. Mattel also creates inspiring and innovative products in collaboration with leading entertainment and technology companies as well as other partners. With a global workforce of approximately 28,000 people, Mattel operates in 40 countries and territories and sells products in more than 150 nations. Visit us online at [www.mattel.com](http://www.mattel.com)