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**PRESS RELEASE: PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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## **Nationally Touring Exhibition, ‘The Power of Children: Making a Difference,’ Opens September 6 at Elmhurst History Museum**

ELMHURST, Ill. – The stories of ordinary children who faced extraordinary circumstances can inspire others to fight discrimination and intolerance. That message is strongly portrayed in “The Power of Children: Making a Difference,” a new exhibition opening on September 6 through October 13, 2019 at the Elmhurst History Museum. The exhibit explores the lives of three children from different eras whose lives teach us about overcoming obstacles to make a positive change in the world: Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White.

Organized by The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, “The Power of Children” exhibit has been made possible through NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and was adapted to tour nationally by the Mid-America Arts Alliance. “The Power of Children” encourages children and families to explore problems of isolation, fear, and prejudice by giving a personal face to three major issues of the 20th century: the Holocaust, the Civil Rights movement, and the AIDS epidemic. Through audio-visual presentations, original artifacts, and hands-on interactive displays, visitors will get to know each child’s story and explore immersive environments that recreate the spaces where each child felt safe—the Frank family’s secret annex; the first grade classroom where Ruby Bridges spent a school year alone with her teacher; and Ryan White’s bedroom, filled with his treasured belongings.

### **Three Extraordinary Children from Different Eras**

Because of her Jewish heritage and faith, Anne Frank spent two years hiding from the Nazis in an annex behind her father's office in Amsterdam during World War II. Anne dreamed of becoming a writer, and while in hiding she kept a diary about her fears, experiences, and thoughts of a better future. Despite her death at a concentration camp in 1945, the power of Anne's words continues to reach millions through her widely published diary.

In 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges broke racial barriers by walking through an angry mob to her classroom each day, a key event in the struggle for Civil Rights that was immortalized by Norman Rockwell in his painting "The Problem We All Live With." Today, years after making her mark on the Civil Rights movement, Ruby continues her fight against racism and hate through The Ruby Bridges Foundation, which provides educational resources and information to children, teachers, and parents nationwide.

As an infant, Ryan White was diagnosed with hemophilia, and in 1984 he learned he had contracted the AIDS virus from a tainted treatment for his disease. When school officials learned of his condition, Ryan was banned from returning to school because of fears and misconceptions associated with HIV/AIDS. Ryan decided to fight back and found a voice as an advocate for AIDS research and education. Today, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides care and treatment for people with HIV/AIDS.

"The Power of Children" aspires to show the impact which words, actions, and voice can have when people are faced with hatred, racism, and discrimination. At the exhibition's end, visitors are challenged to find ways that they can make a difference.

### **A Timely Learning Experience**

According to Elmhurst History Museum's executive director David Oberg, it is this call to action that spurred the museum to bring the exhibit to Elmhurst, a plan that was set in motion more than five years ago. "The themes of this exhibit are as meaningful and necessary today as ever," said Oberg. "Even though Ruby, Anne, and Ryan's stories take place in the past, fast forward to 2019 and their experiences sound familiar to us in a modern context—Malala Yousafzai is a recent pertinent example." Oberg added: "It is a unique power that young people have to stand up to injustice and remind the adults in their world of their role in these battles. We feel it is our obligation to share exhibits like this with the public in the hope that we can inspire all people to

stand up to combat prejudice and intolerance in all its forms.”

### **Exhibit-Related Programs**

The Elmhurst History Museum has planned a number of special exhibit-related programs to connect to the “Power of Children” exhibit in the coming weeks including:

#### **Sundays, Sept. 8, 15, 22 & 29: *Exhibit Pop-Up Gallery Performances*, 2 p.m., FREE**

Drop by the Elmhurst History Museum’s first floor gallery to encounter actors from GreenMan Theatre Troupe performing a different 10-15 minute vignette each week—from Miep Gies, who helped protect Anne Frank’s family, to Ryan White’s best friend, Heather.

#### **Thursday, Oct. 3: *Shiza Shahid Lecture at Elmhurst College*, 7 p.m., \$20**

Shiza Shahid is an entrepreneur, technologist, and impact leader who co-founded the Malala Fund with Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. As its founding CEO, Shahid focused on creating access to high-quality education for all children around the world. Shahid will describe her work with Malala, her struggle to create social change, and how ordinary people can make extraordinary waves. Tickets online at [elmhurst.edu/cultural](http://elmhurst.edu/cultural).

#### **Sunday, October 6: *The Power of Performance with GreenMan Theatre Troupe*, 2 p.m., Elmhurst History Museum Education Center, \$5 Adults/17 & under FREE**

Building on the pop-up gallery performances presented in September, GreenMan Theatre Troupe brings the “Power of Children” exhibit experience to a close in its final week with a series of dramatic scenes that evoke the characters encountered in the exhibit. Meet Otto and Anne Frank, Ryan White, and others as they share their stories and expand on the exhibit’s powerful messages. Registration required at [elmhursthhistory.org](http://elmhursthhistory.org) (Family Programs section).

Additional programs include youth and adult book discussions and a tour of the Illinois Holocaust Museum for adults. More information can be found on the Elmhurst History Museum’s web site at [www.elmhursthhistory.org](http://www.elmhursthhistory.org) in the programs section or call 630-833-1457.

This fall, be inspired by the example of our youth to make change through “The Power of Children: Making a Difference,” which will be on display through September 6 through October 13, 2019. The Elmhurst History Museum is located at 120 E. Park Ave. in downtown Elmhurst. Museum hours are Sunday and Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 10

a.m. to 5 p.m. General admission is free, and limited free parking is available. For the latest exhibit and program information, please visit [elmhursthistory.org](http://elmhursthistory.org) or call (630) 833-1457.

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*The Elmhurst History Museum is a department of the City of Elmhurst supported by the Elmhurst Heritage Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit organization. The museum is located at 120 E. Park Ave. in downtown Elmhurst. General admission is free. For more information, call 630-833-1457 or visit our web site at [www.elmhursthistory.org](http://www.elmhursthistory.org).*

#### **About NEH on the Road**

**NEH on the Road (NEHOTR)** is a fully funded initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, designed to create wider national access to the ideas, themes, and stories explored in major grant-funded NEH exhibitions.

Learn more at [www.nehontheroad.org](http://www.nehontheroad.org)

#### **About the National Endowment for the Humanities**

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the NEH and its grant programs is available at: [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov).

#### **About Mid-America Arts Alliance**

Founded in 1972, M-AAA is a regional arts organization that supports artists and arts organizations in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. MAAA brings more art to more people by annually producing and managing more than 450 exhibitions, performances, and professional development opportunities in more than 175 communities with more than 1,500 related educational programs. For more information, go to [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org).