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**CELEBRATE *CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD AND HOLIDAYS OF LIGHT,*
AN ANNUAL CHICAGO TRADITION!**
MSI HOSTS ROBOT-THEMED HOLIDAY

CHICAGO—Experience the beloved annual holiday tradition with the Museum of Science and Industry’s 74th annual *Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light* exhibits, opening on November 19, 2015. This year’s colorful theme is inspired by the Museum’s temporary exhibit, *Robot Revolution*.

In the Rotunda, MSI’s 45-foot Grand Tree will be decked out with more than 30,000 twinkling colorful lights and hundreds of ornaments and trimmings in bright, vibrant shades. Images of robots will even be helping to decorate the tree! Around the Museum’s Rotunda, fun-loving robots taking in iconic Chicago holiday traditions will be featured on four giant banners that surround the tree. Guests can also enjoy festive holiday tunes and “snow” falling every half hour.

The Museum’s Main Floor will dazzle with 50, 12-foot trees beautifully decorated by volunteers from Chicago’s ethnic communities representing their diverse culture and holiday traditions. This custom began for local families in 1942 with a single tree as a United Nations Day salute to the Allies during World War II. Now the exhibit has grown into a forest of dazzling trees and homemade displays, created by dedicated volunteers. The celebration runs through January 3, 2016.

On the weekends and select weekdays, guests can also enjoy performances of various ethnic dance and choral groups on the Holiday Stage. Santa Claus is making a few stops at MSI this year, and guests will have the opportunity to take their photo with him on these select weekends from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Saturday-Sunday, December 5-6; Saturday-Sunday, December 12-13; and Saturday-Sunday, December 19-20.

Robot Revolution, supported by Google.org with additional major support from The Boeing Company, is also at the Museum of Science Industry through January 3, 2016. This exhibit comes to life with a collection of cutting-edge robots from around the world, giving guests the extraordinary opportunity to interact with robots that have rarely been shown to the public before.

Trees and Traditions

Each *Christmas Around the World* tree offers insight into the diverse customs that exist during the holiday season or the culture of a particular country.

The Estonian tree celebrates the Song and Dance Festival, which takes place in capital Tallinn once every five years and is the largest event featuring Estonian national costumes. To represent this proud tradition, small dolls in costumes decorate the tree. The tree’s garlands are belts that are a key part of the national costume and are specific to each region. Small, woven snowflakes and festive handmade children’s mittens represent “hand arts,” a longstanding custom for women in Estonia. Snowflakes and icicles adorn the tree in honor of the cold, northern European climate.

The Puerto Rican tree is decorated with a number of musical instruments of all types. Guitars, maracas, tambourines and *güiros* (a wooden fish-shaped percussion instrument) all adorn the tree to symbolize the *Parrandas*, musicians who go door to door during the six weeks of Christmas celebrations. In addition, Poinsettias, which are indigenous to Central America, are featured across the branches. Three golden wise men statues are situated beneath the tree, paying homage to the Three Kings—Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar—who are separately celebrated on January 6 in Puerto Rico.

The ornaments on the Japanese tree are *Kami-Ningyo* (paper dolls in traditional Japanese kimonos made out of *Chiyogami*, printed Japanese handmade papers), paper *Kabuto* (warrior's helmet), and umbrellas made out of papers and toothpicks—a well-known craft in Japan.

Holidays of Light, now in its 21st year, is a multicultural display of holidays that celebrate light or enlightenment. Each year, the display highlights the traditions of the Chinese New Year, Diwali (a Hindu and Sikh festival), Kwanzaa (celebrated by African Americans), Ramadan (celebrated by Muslims), Hanukkah (a Jewish holiday), Visakha Puja Day (a Buddhist holiday), and St. Lucia Day (a Swedish tradition).

Festive Performances and Great Gift Ideas

The Holiday Stage will offer joyous performances from the talented groups that represent the different cultures and countries showcased in *Christmas Around the World*. Each weekend, guests will be entertained by various dance troupes and choirs spreading the joyful spirit through traditional ethnic dance, song and pageantry. In addition, choral performances from area schools will delight guests with holiday favorites during select weekdays. All performances take place on the Holiday Stage on the Museum's Main Floor, and a full schedule is available at msichicago.org in November. Don't forget to make a stop at the Holiday Shoppe, full of great gifts and trinkets for family and friends, including unique ornaments representing cultures around the world.

Christmas Around the World and *Holidays of Light* are included in Museum Entry, as are all performances. An additional ticket is required for *Robot Revolution*. Visit msichicago.org for details and to purchase tickets. They all run through January 3, 2016.

Santa Claus will be at the Museum for photo opportunities with guests on select December dates from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Saturday-Sunday, December 5-6; Saturday-Sunday, December 12-13; and Saturday-Sunday, December 19-20. For more information, visit msichicago.org.

Regular Museum hours are 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., but extended hours (until 5:30 p.m.) are offered on the following days: November 21-22; November 27 – 29; December 5, 6, 12, 13; December 19 – 23, December 26 – 30; and January 2-3. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Christmas Around the World and *Holidays of Light* are all presented by Pepsi. *Robot Revolution* is sponsored by Google.org with additional major support from The Boeing Company.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science centers in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive science experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. Through groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to Live Science Experiences that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Center for the Advancement of Science Education (CASE), MSI offers a variety of student, teacher and family programs that make a difference in

communities and contribute to the Museum's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. Come visit and find your inspiration! MSI is open 9:30–4 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas day. Extended hours, until 5:30 p.m., are offered during peak periods. The Museum is supported in part through the generosity of the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, find MSI online at msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414 or (800) GO-TO-MSI outside of the Chicago area.

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