

Contact:Isabel Morales, (773) 947-6003, isabel.morales@msichicago.orgAmy Patti, (773) 947-6005, amy.patti@msichicago.org**MORE THAN 50 GLOBAL CULTURES COME TOGETHER TO COMMEMORATE 75TH ANNIVERSARY
OF CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD AND HOLIDAYS OF LIGHT EXHIBITS**

*The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago encourages community
to gather 'round to celebrate different cultures and holiday traditions*

CHICAGO, Ill. (October 19, 2017)—Feel the warmth of family, friends and tradition at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago's (MSI) 75th anniversary of *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light*. Guests are invited to celebrate dozens of holiday customs with trees and displays, including three new additions, decorated to represent cultures from across the globe. This one-of-a-kind celebration returns to MSI November 16, 2017 and will run through January 7, 2018.

Christmas Around the World began in 1942 as a United Nations Day salute to the Allies during World War II. In its first year, a single tree was newly decorated every day for 12 days to represent the countries fighting alongside America during World War II. Today, the exhibit has grown to more than 50 trees and displays, offering insight into the holiday customs celebrated by families around the world.

Now in its 23rd year, *Holidays of Light* highlights the holidays that honor light or enlightenment with decorated vitrines containing symbolic objects that showcase these celebrations. *Holidays of Light* focuses on the traditions of the Chinese New Year, Diwali, Kwanzaa, Ramadan, Hanukkah, Visakha Puja Day, and St. Lucia Day. *Holidays of Light* is located among the trees throughout the Museum's Main Floor.

At the center of it all inside the Museum's impressive domed Rotunda stands the 45-foot-tall Grand Tree, adorned with more than 30,000 twinkling lights and ornaments. Guests can also enjoy festive holiday music and "snow" falling every half hour on the Museum's Main Floor.

New Trees and Traditions

This year, guests will notice three additional trees in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of *Christmas Around the World*—Assyria, Australia, and Nigeria:

- **Assyria:** Assyrians come from modern-day Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon. The theme of this tree is brotherhood, and is celebrated with decorations that include photos and ornaments that represent khigga, a folk dance in which people form a line by holding hands.
- **Australia:** Guests will see home-made paperchains, decorations representing native Australian fauna and flora, and sheep. Plus, several ornaments are created by indigenous Australian artists which reflect the multicultural nature of the country.
- **Nigeria:** This tree will include traditional Nigerian holiday decorations, including handmade, multi-colored Nigerian lace fabric and garlands created from black-eyed peas and beaded jewelry, highlighting the rich family customs shared by all Nigerian people at Christmastime.

These trees join the more than 50 trees and displays in the exhibit, inviting guests to celebrate the rich history surrounding the holiday traditions of cultures from nearly every continent.

Festive Performances and Other Holiday Fun

- Guests can enjoy lively performances from all corners of the globe during *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light*. Local cultural groups will perform native dances in the Museum's Main Auditorium inside the West Pavilion. Performances will take place on

November 18-19, 24-26; December 2-3, 9-10, and 16-17. A full schedule and times will become available at msichicago.org in November.

- Stop by *Yesterday's Main Street* where Santa will be making special visits during *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light*. Children can meet Santa before his epic Christmas journey on November 18-19, 24-26, 30; December 1-3, 7-10, 14-17, and 21-23. Guests are also welcome to take photos with our 45-foot-tall Grand Tree.
- Don't forget to make a stop at the Holiday Shop, full of great gifts and festive trinkets for family and friends, including unique ornaments representing cultures around the world and a one-of-a-kind snow globe sold exclusively at MSI.

Christmas Around the World and *Holidays of Light* are included in Museum Entry, as are all cultural performances.

The Museum is open every day from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. **The Museum will offer extended hours until 5:30 p.m. on the following days this holiday season:** November 18-19, 24-26, December 2-3, 9-10, 16-23, and the 26-30. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Christmas Around the World photos are available for download at <http://bit.ly/2xxgjNn>. Please credit "Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago."

Christmas Around the World and *Holidays of Light* are sponsored by GATX Corporation.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI'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 grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.

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