



Bourbonnais Township PARK DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Exploration Station Partners with KultureCity to Become Sensory Inclusive

Sensory Awareness Month is celebrated in October. The month is a time to increase understanding of the importance of sensory integration and processing, and to help people learn how to support those with sensory processing difficulties. Bourbonnais Township Park District is excited to announce its partnership with KultureCity, the nation's leading non-profit organization dedicated to sensory inclusion at Exploration Station. This collaboration aims to ensure that all visitors, especially those with sensory sensitivities, can enjoy a fully inclusive and accommodating experience at the hands-on discovery center.

As part of this initiative, Exploration Station proudly introduces a new Sensory Room. Located in the heart of the museum, this room is designed with an array of sensory items, including a weighted lap pad and soft lighting. The space also features interactive light cubes and textured walls, providing a serene environment where visitors can rest, recharge, and find calm before returning to their exploring the hands on discovery center for kids. The creation of this Sensory Room was made possible by proceeds from the Chocolate Tour and contributions from the River Valley Special Recreation Association (RVSRA).

“We are thrilled to partner with BTPD on the implementation of their Sensory Room at Exploration Station,” said Kristin Giacchino, Executive Director of RVSRA. “Sensory spaces offer significant benefits for everyone, especially individuals with special needs. For many, the lights, sounds, and activities of other museum guests can become overwhelming. The KultureCity Sensory Room provides a dedicated, calming space that allows individuals and families to reset, promoting a more inclusive environment for all visitors.”

Exploration Station has successfully completed KultureCity's sensory inclusion certification. This comprehensive process involved extensive training for BTPD staff, enabling them to better recognize and assist guests with sensory needs, and effectively manage sensory overload situations. Exploration Station is now equipped with sensory bags containing noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, and verbal cue cards, which are available to any guest who may feel overwhelmed during their visit.

Sensory sensitivities, often associated with conditions such as autism, PTSD, dementia, and other similar disorders, can make environments with high levels of stimulation—like Exploration Station —challenging. The certification ensures that Exploration Station is now better prepared to support visitors with these sensitivities, offering them a more comfortable and enjoyable experience.

“We are incredibly proud to partner with KultureCity and to take this significant step toward making Exploration Station a more welcoming and inclusive space for all children and their families,” said Amanda Langlois, Deputy Director of BTPD. “Our goal is to create an environment where every child, regardless of their sensory needs, can explore, learn, and have fun.”

Families can further enhance their visit by downloading the free KultureCity App before coming to Exploration Station. The app provides detailed information on the sensory features available at the museum and includes a Social Story, helping to prepare children for what to expect, making their experience less overwhelming.

This partnership with KultureCity is part of the organization's broader mission to create sensory-inclusive spaces across the country. Since its inception, KultureCity has transformed over 350 venues in four countries, including major events like the NFL Super Bowl and MLB All-Star Weekend. The organization’s impact continues to grow, having recently been recognized as one of the World’s Most Innovative Companies by FastCompany. In the Chicagoland area, KultureCity has also partnered with the Chicago Cubs and the Chicago White Sox, who were the first Major League Baseball team to join the initiative. Langlois and her staff had the opportunity to visit and meet with the White Sox staff, witnessing firsthand the success of becoming more inclusive.

For more information about Exploration Station and its new sensory-inclusive offerings, please visit btpd.org. Exploration Station is located at 1095 W. Perry St, Bourbonnais, IL. The facility is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. For more information about Exploration Station and its new sensory-inclusive offerings, please visit btpd.org.

An open house to celebrate Sensory Awareness Month and our new Sensory Room will be held Tuesday, October 1, at 10:00 am.

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