



April 27, 2016

For Immediate Release

Contact: Cecilia Clark, cclark@cdm.org; 408-221-3814

Autumn Young, ayoung@cdm.org; office 408-673-2861 cell 408-656-4038

**Civil Rights Activist Ruby Bridges to Receive
Legacy for Children Award from
Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose**

***Ruby Bridges Is Anti-Bullying Hero
to Millions of Children***

San Jose, CA – April 27, 2016 – Ruby Bridges, the youngest foot soldier of the [Civil Rights Movement](#), inspires millions of children today as the ultimate anti-bullying hero. Ruby walked into history on November 14, 1960 as one of the first black children to attend an all-white elementary school in New Orleans, helping end years of segregation and forever changing a nation. [Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose](#) will honor [Ruby Bridges](#) with the [Legacy for Children Award 2016](#) at the annual fundraising gala on May 20, at 6 p.m. at the McEnery Convention Center in San Jose. (Event tickets @cdm.org/legacy or at 408-673-2845.)

Ruby Bridges is well known to children across the country and especially in Santa Clara County where her book, [Through My Eyes](#) and accompanying curriculum, is part of [YMCA Project Cornerstone's](#) classroom program to combat bullying. The program has impacted more than 100,000 elementary students since 2008. According to **Project Cornerstone**, research in schools shows that nearly one-fourth of students across all grade levels report being harassed or bullied at school because of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

"Children are drawn to me because I suffered the ultimate bullying by adults," said **Ruby Bridges**. Her motto is: *"Racism is a grown-up disease and we must stop using our children to spread it."*

Marilee Jennings, executive director of [Children's Discovery Museum](#), said, "Every year people offer suggestions for **Legacy** recipients, but what makes **Ruby Bridges** the perfect honoree is that I received this recommendation from a child. And even though Ruby's story occurred 56 years ago,

children can relate to how brave this six-year-old child was against the mobs of angry adults that bullied and harassed her that school year. I think this heroism resonates profoundly for kids today.”

Each year the [Legacy for Children Award](#) honors an individual who has made a tremendous difference in the lives of children. Past recipients include [Steve Wozniak](#), [Kristi Yamaguchi](#), [Mister Fred Rogers](#), [Dr. Sally Ride](#), and [Ronnie Lott](#). Funds raised support the museum’s hands-on educational exhibits, in-depth programming and cultural events that emphasize diversity and inclusion. The gala also helps fund the museum’s “**Open Door Policy**,” which ensures that all children, regardless of their family’s income, have access to the museum’s unique learning experiences. Last year’s 16th annual event raised \$1.3 million.

Background on Ruby Bridges

[Ruby Bridges](#) did break the color barrier that November morning in 1960. However, white parents refused to send their children to school and angry protesters harassed Ruby as she walked the steps of the school escorted by federal marshals. For months, Ruby sat alone in her classroom, instructed one-on-one by Barbara Henry, a white teacher from Boston. Ruby’s family also suffered from society’s turmoil. Her father lost his job, the grocery store refused to serve them, and her grandparents were kicked off the sharecropper land they worked for 25 years. But by the end of the first school year, protests subsided, people reached out to the Bridges, white children returned to school and Ruby wasn’t nearly as ostracized.

Years later when Ruby returned to her alma mater with her nieces, she noticed the school and the surrounding area suffered from poverty and high crime rates. Ruby sprang into action, volunteering and establishing after-school classes and a multicultural art program and traveling to other schools with an anti-bullying message of cultural understanding, respect and tolerance. She’s received numerous honors for her work through the [Ruby Bridges Foundation](#) she founded in 1999.

Her story has been commemorated in books, films and in the Norman Rockwell painting, “[The Problem We All Live With.](#)” In 2001, Ruby was awarded the [Presidential Citizens Medal by President Bill Clinton](#) and in 2007 her life was highlighted along with Anne Frank and Ryan White in an exhibition created by the [Children’s Museum of Indianapolis](#) about extraordinary children who have overcome obstacles to make a difference in the world. In 2011, she was invited to the [White House by President Obama](#). Today she travels the country encouraging others to join her in ending racism and prejudice.

About Children’s Discovery Museum With over 150 interactive exhibits and programs, [Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose \(CDM\)](#) is one of the largest museums of its kind in the nation. Since opening its doors in 1990, CDM has welcomed over 7 million visitors and has offered new exhibits each year that respond to children’s diverse educational needs. The striking 52,000 square foot purple building was designed by Mexico City-based architect Ricardo Legorreta and is a beacon of discovery. Encompassing the broad themes of community, connections and creativity, hands-on exhibits invite self-directed, open-ended explorations. For more information about the Museum, visit www.cdm.org.