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For Immediate Release

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Hello from Japan! Opens at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose on Feb. 17

New Multimedia Exhibition Presents Contemporary and Ancient Traditions

San Jose, CA – January 31, 2024 –*Hello from Japan!*, the latest exhibition at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, opens Saturday, February 17. Local families will have the opportunity to experience present-day Tokyo and explore ancient and contemporary traditions of Japanese culture. The multimedia exhibit sponsored by [CEFCU](#) will run through June 9.

"One of the things parents share with us is their desire to educate their children as global citizens," says Marilee Jennings, executive director of Children's Discovery Museum. "[Hello from Japan!](#) reflects our long history of exploring world cultures from the annual Cultural Celebration Series to exhibits like our award-winning *Voyage to Vietnam*. I'm proud of the role we play in helping children and families build bridges of understanding."

Originally developed at Children's Museum of Manhattan and now owned by Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, the exhibition invites families to explore an immersive, child-sized Tokyo streetscape and Shinto shrine park, contrasting between modern culture and traditional Japanese practices.

Children will have fun expressing their own individuality and gaining insight into modern Japanese society as they create *kawaii* outfits, design playful mascots, explore seasonal cuisines, practice writing Japanese characters, and sing along to Japanese children's songs in a *karaoke* booth.

Based upon the colorful and bustling streets in the modern *Harajuku* district of Tokyo, *Kawaii Central* explores contemporary Japanese culture by evoking the friendly feel of Japanese *kawaii*, an aesthetic and sensibility which emerged in the 1970s among Japanese school children and now permeates cultures worldwide. Think "Hello Kitty and Pokémon." The time-honored Japanese traditions co-exist with this contemporary culture of *kawaii*-inspired graphics and products, characterized by round figures, vibrant colors and a whimsical, cute aesthetic.

A bridge at the end of the streetscape leads from the contemporary urban setting into a more tranquil Shinto shrine. The park explores the traditional, nature-based practices and beliefs of Shinto, an indigenous Japanese religion. Families will learn diverse and powerful elements of nature and explore the shrine area's crawl-through forest, make a wish at a large Wishing Tree, get their fortune told and encounter a few of Japan's *kami* spirits.

[About Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose](#)

Kids lead the way at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, exploring and discovering through open-ended, play-based learning. Over 150 hands-on exhibits and programs in the sciences, humanities, arts, nature, and health spark curiosity and ignite family fun where children build life skills in creative and critical thinking, problem solving, and confidence. The nonprofit celebrates people and diverse cultures, creates authentic connections, and builds global understanding. Welcoming more than 10 million visitors since 1990, the award-winning museum inspires creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning inside the stunning 50,000 square foot purple building designed by the late world renowned Mexico City architect Ricardo Legoretta, and outside in the half-acre nature space.

For more information about the museum, visit www.cdm.org.

Additional Information

Hello from Japan! is owned by Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose and is based on the original exhibition at Children's Museum of Manhattan. Funding for the development of *Hello from Japan!* was originally provided by The Freeman Foundation as part of the foundation's Asian Culture Exhibit Series and administered by Association of Children's Museums to bring outstanding interactive exhibits about Asian cultures to children, their families and school groups at children's museums across the United States.

Advisors to the exhibition and the programming series included professors from Harvard University and Columbia University, the Japan Society, the Asia Society, and the Association for Children's Museums.

The exhibit has traveled to eight other children's museums around the country, including but not limited to: the Children's Museum of the Upstate (Greenville, SC), Children's Discovery Museum (Normal, IL), Mississippi Children's Museum (Jackson, MS), Discovery Children's Museum (Las Vegas, NV), and Hawaii Children's Discovery Center (Honolulu, HI).

CEFCU

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose's exhibition sponsor, Citizens Equity First Credit Union (CEFCU), is a financial cooperative owned by more than 360,000 members. For more information, visit [CEFCU](#).