



3/21/2023

Honorable Senator Nick A. Frentz  
Capital Investments Committee  
State Capitol , Minnesota Senate  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Frentz and Capital Investments Committee,

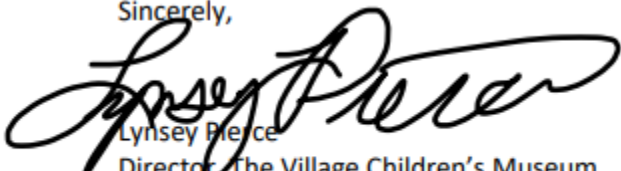
As a member of the Greater Minnesota Children's Museum Coalition, The Village Children's Museum in Willmar, MN is dedicated to ensuring Minnesota's children can engage in meaningful open-ended play opportunities. The power of play is so necessary the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights recognize play as a right for EVERY child. The Village, like our 9 partner museums across the state dedicates its existence to developing future Minnesotans through engaging, play-based, exhibits that grow stable relationships in our communities. We provide equitable play opportunities which is critical in the development of a child's brain, engaging them in learning how to learn.

Since its inception, The Village Children's Museum has focused on the whole child and community. We are a cultural center connecting the dynamic, multicultural tapestry that is West Central Minnesota. We have families from a variety of cultures represented in our membership and these families seek us out for information and assistance. We serve our members by sharing community resources to fill financial, social and emotional needs. These conversations often take place in multiple languages English, Spanish, Somali, Hindu, American Sign Language, Ukrainian, Hmong, and Karen among others. While parents share and learn, children play, sowing the seeds of acceptance as partners and peers, reinforcing our community's dedication to cultural acceptance and diversity.

This important work is essential to the success of our community, and our current site does not allow room for the growth our program needs to continue serving our community. Our 2.5-million-dollar capital investment appropriation request benefits not only our 5-county service area with a population of nearly 80,000 people, but also the families and children in the more 20 counties statewide who seek out the opportunities The Village provides. Transportation to these spaces is sometimes difficult in rural MN, this appropriation ensures equal opportunities for rural families to access high-quality educational spaces. We will use this appropriation to purchase property featuring a 15,000 sq ft exhibit space. We will design updates, including adding a space tailored to play-based learning for older children. Other needs identified in our build out plan include connection rooms for community groups and parents, HVAC and roofing replacements, exterior and interior renovations and exhibit design and installation.

I humbly ask you to support the needs of the children and families in our community, by supporting The Village Children's Museum through Capital Investment Cash Appropriation SF 1904 which provides equitable access to high-quality, play-based learning throughout Greater Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Lynsey Pierce  
Director, The Village Children's Museum  
Willmar, MN