

For Immediate Release

Parades, Winter Festivities and a Concert among Grand Rapids' Holiday Highlights, November 21

GRAND RAPIDS, MI., October 30, 2015 – Unwrap the season with a grouping of several exciting and festive seasonal staples offered by several downtown organizations. Welcome Santa to Grand Rapids in the Art Van Santa Parade, follow it up hot chocolate and children's books read by Mrs. Claus at the Grand Rapids Public Library, arts and crafts at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum, and finish the day off with a spectacular musical performance of "The Snowman" by the Grand Rapids Symphony. On Saturday, November 21st, don't miss these opportunities to show your children the wonder of the season!

The West Michigan holiday season will officially kick-off with the Art Van Santa Parade, presented by the Grand Rapids Jaycees. The Jaycees are excited to announce the theme for this year's parade will be "Unwrap the Magic." Downtown Grand Rapids will be filled the sweet sounds of local marching bands, carolers and local performers. Entrants for the 2015 event will create unique entries around the theme, including costumes, music and floats based on popular and classic holiday songs. Thousands of parade-goers will be watching as the parade makes its way down the streets of Grand Rapids. The parade will be broadcast LIVE on WOOD TV8 starting at 9am on Saturday, November 21.

After the Art Van Santa Parade, stop by the Grand Rapids Public Library at 111 Library St NE to warm up with some holiday cheer. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be stopping by after the parade to meet all the good little girls and boys in Grand Rapids. Listen to stories with Mrs. Claus while you warm up with a cup of hot chocolate. Tell Santa what you want for Christmas, participate in the first annual lighting of the Library Tree, and join in a holiday sing-along. Holiday crafts and hands-on fun for all ages! The library will be hosting the event from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It is free and open to the public. Free parking is available in the library's lot.

At 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., help the Grand Rapids Children's Museum decorate theatre materials for the Children's Healing Center, the first year-round recreation facility for kids with weak immune systems and their families. Stop by 11 Sheldon Ave to join the winter festivities.

Finally, join the Grand Rapids Symphony as the award winning children's book "The Snowman" by Raymond Briggs comes to life in an exciting storytelling performance of music. The DTE Energy Foundation Family Series concert captures a magical night as a boy and his snowman friend go soaring and exploring in the snow. The music is accompanied by the entire animated film that is sure to entertain the whole family! The Snowman, conducted by John Varineau, will take place at 3 p.m. at DeVos Performance Hall.

Grand Rapids Symphony tickets to "The Snowman" are \$5 for children and \$15 for adults. Tickets start at \$5 for children and \$15 for adults. Tickets are available at the Symphony office, weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 300 Ottawa NW, Suite 100, by calling 616.454.9451 x 4 or online at GRSymphony.org.

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About the Grand Rapids Public Library

The Grand Rapids Public Library connects people to the transforming power of knowledge. Learn more at grpl.org.

About the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum

The Grand Rapids Children’s Museum creates minds through play by providing open ended, creative, interactive, play experiences which have been shown to help the cognitive, social emotional and physical development of children. Children ages 0-10 learn while having fun each time they visit. The Museum is open to the public Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursdays 9:30am-8:00 pm (Thursday Family Night sponsored by Amway 5-8 p.m.) and Sundays noon-5 p.m. Regular admission is \$8.25 per person,\$7.25 ages 65+. Family Night is \$1.75 and Pals Members and children under 1 are free! For more information, please visit www.grcm.org.

About the Grand Rapids Symphony

The Grand Rapids Symphony was officially organized in 1930 and is nationally recognized for the quality of its concerts and educational programs. Led by Music Advisor Larry Rachleff, Principal Pops Conductor Bob Bernhardt and Associate Conductor John Varineau, nine concert series are presented, featuring a wide range of music and performance styles. More than 400 performances are presented each year, touching the lives of some 200,000. Nearly half of those who benefit are students, senior citizens and people with disabilities reached through extensive education and community service programs. The Symphony’s Affiliated Organizations include the Grand Rapids Bach Festival, Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus, Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra, and Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses. The Symphony also provides the orchestra for Opera Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Ballet Company. To learn more about the Grand Rapids Symphony please visit GRSymphony.org.

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