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“The Robot Zoo” New Traveling Exhibition Opening at Grand Rapids Public Museum on March 19

Grand Rapids, MI: The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) announced today that tickets are on sale for the new exhibition *The Robot Zoo* opening on Saturday, March 19. The exhibit is based on the book “The Robot Zoo,” and allows visitors to explore the biomechanics of complex animal robots to discover how real animals work.

The Robot Zoo will open on Saturday, March 19 with a special Opening Party fundraiser benefiting the GRPM. Visitors of all ages will have first access to the exhibit at this party to discover how real animals work through the biomechanics of complex robotic animals.

The Robot Zoo Opening Party will take place all day on Saturday, March 19 at the GRPM. Hands on activities include face painting, live animals from the John Ball Zoo, balloon animals, and a robot and animal costume parade with prizes for the top costumes. Come dressed in your best costume!

Use your Opening Party ticket in the morning and eat breakfast at the Museum. Breakfast will include bagels, fruits, granola bars and donut holes with milk, juice, coffee or water. Or use your Opening Party ticket in the afternoon and eat lunch at the Museum. Lunch will include Texas Roadhouse pulled pork sliders, chips, Olive Garden salad and dessert with milk, water or juice.

Admission to the Opening Party will be \$10 for member adults and FREE for member children. Non-members can purchase a year family membership and receive incredible savings for the Opening Party. Purchase a one year, basic family membership plus 4 tickets to the event for \$80, saving \$57! Purchase a one year, basic family membership plus 2 tickets to the event for \$75, saving \$26. Non-member adults are \$18 for event only tickets and non-member children are \$13.

To purchase tickets to the Opening Party visit grpm.org, call 616.456.3977 or visit the Museum’s front desk. To purchase a membership package with tickets to the Opening Party, non-members must call 616.456.3977.

In *The Robot Zoo* exhibit machinery in the robot animals simulates the body parts of their real-life counterparts. In the robot animals, muscles become pistons, intestines become filtering pipes and brains become computers. Eight robot animals and more than a dozen hands-on activities illustrate fascinating real-life characteristics, such as



how a chameleon changes colors, a giant squid propels itself and a fly walks on the ceiling.

The larger-than-life-size animated robots include a chameleon, a rhinoceros, a giant squid with 18-foot tentacles and a platypus. Also featured are a house fly with a 10-foot wingspread, a grasshopper, a bat and a giraffe whose head and neck alone stretch 9 feet tall.

Other sensory activities include “Swat the Fly,” a test of the visitor’s reaction time (one-twelfth as fast as a house fly’s), and “Sticky Feet,” where visitors can experience what it’s like to be a fly on the wall. Triggering the “Tongue Gun” demonstrates how a real chameleon shoots out its long, sticky-tipped tongue to reel in a meal.

Animation in the robots imitates real-life behaviors. The robot chameleon rocks back and forth as it turns its head, looks around and fires its tongue at its insect prey. The front legs of the platypus swim in breaststroke style while the tail moves up and down. The tentacles of the giant squid grip a struggling fish, while the squid’s beak-like mouth opens to reveal a spinning food grinder.

After March 19, *The Robot Zoo* will be offered free of charge to Grand Rapids Public Museum members, and will be \$11 for non-member adults, \$10 for non-members seniors and \$6 for non-member children.

Grand Rapids Public Museum

The Grand Rapids Public Museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is located in downtown Grand Rapids, MI at 272 Pearl Street, NW. The mission of the museum is to be a living monument of artifacts, ideas and stories told through exhibitions, events and educational programming designed to inspire, motivate and celebrate our human bond. We enrich the life of our community through experiences of the wider world in a uniquely Grand Rapids context. For additional information including hours of operation, admission fees and exhibit/event listings, please visit www.grpm.org.

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