



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## THE GRAND RAPIDS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW ADDITIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*New Artist in Residency Program To Begin This June*

**[Grand Rapids, MI] May 23, 2023** – The Grand Rapids Children's Museum is pleased to announce the addition of 4 new members to its Board of Directors effective April 19, 2023 at the Annual Meeting of the Members. New board members include Katherine (Katie) Mason Asante, Krashawn Martin, Margaret Vega, and Jessica Yon. The 23-member board helps support fundraising, programming and volunteering efforts in collaboration with museum CEO Maggie Lancaster.

"We are so excited to welcome 4 incredibly brilliant, talented, and strong women to the GRCM Board," says Maggie Lancaster, CEO, Grand Rapids Children's Museum. "They will launch us into the next 25 years with a great amount of vision." GRCM also honored outgoing president John Parker. John Parker will be succeeded by Nick Paradiso.



Katherine (Katie) Mason Asante

**Katherine (Katie) Mason Asante:** After working in museum development in New York City and as a graphic designer in Chicago, Katie Mason Asante returned to Grand Rapids to help manage Mason Jones, a third-generation, family-owned business in 2017. Mason Jones is a West Michigan destination for inspired living and giving. The shop features a creative mix of products for entertaining, decorating, and gifting. Founded by Katie's grandmother, Margy Jones, in 1978, the original Gaslight Village location offered personalized stationery, wedding invitations, and gifts. Her mother, PK Mason, joined the team in 1990, and as they expanded into tableware, home décor, and gift registry, the shop moved to Breton Village.

"I love working with our clients to celebrate all of life's milestones, and I also love hearing their stories of daily living in Grand Rapids," says Asante. "It gives me a huge appreciation for everything this city has to offer—the incredible support of small businesses like ours, an abundance of family-friendly activities, and a community that strives to make life here even better for future generations. I'm thrilled to join the GRCM Board and to support our city's greatest resource for learning through play!"





Krashawn Martin

**Krashawn Martin:** Krashawn Martin is the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Wyoming. In this role, she leads a team managing 21 parks, 700 acres of parkland, and almost 500 recreation programs for all ages. She also champions and leads diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives for the organization. She is a certified parks and recreation professional through the National Parks and Recreation Association. Krashawn holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Education in Education Administration from Grand Valley State University. She serves on several community boards and is passionate about removing barriers and creating spaces where all people can thrive.

“Being on the GRCM Board is a very special opportunity for me personally as it is a place where I bring my children and I PLAY! GRCM is a place that celebrates play for all people of all backgrounds and I am thrilled to play a small part in spreading the positive message of GRCM to the community.”



Margaret Vega

**Margaret Vega:** Professor Emeritus of Painting Margaret Vega taught Undergraduate and Graduate Painting, Drawing, Color theory, Concept Development and Thesis at Kendall College of Art and Design until 2022. She has also taught at Accademia di Belle Arti in Perugia, Italy and Grand Valley State University. Margaret has had numerous major exhibitions throughout her career. Her work is in private and corporate collections in the US, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Europe. She is represented by Dacia Gallery, NYC and Via Design, GR, MI. Margaret has received many awards including: Michigan Council for the Arts Grant, YWCA Tribute Award for outstanding contribution to the Arts; Legacy: Woman’s History Month Award. Vega is Founding Director of SiteStudio, an organization that brings maker experiences to children within their community, and Children Designing for

Children initiative. [www.artlinkgr.weebly.com](http://www.artlinkgr.weebly.com).

“Play inspires and involves inventive creativity, both as a maker and as a lateral problem-solving tool. Open-ended play allows the child to engage in possibilities of the yet unimagined; to learn and explore with an unrehearsed intellect.”

Margaret Vega will be the first artist to debut the return of the Artist in Residence summer program at GRCM, a project supported by the Michigan Arts and Culture Council. She will lead weekly drop-in workshops throughout the month of June that will be included with regular museum admission. Weekly workshop themes include a build a bridge project, found objects, storytelling with pictures, and dreaming clouds. For more information, please visit [www.grcm.org](http://www.grcm.org).

“As the first GRCM visiting artist and as a Board Member, I hope to work with the programming and implementation of visual and tactile creative play that uses learning to foster open-ended solutions. This is what artists do in their studios every day,” Vega states. “I am also interested in the next phase of the museum that will involve acquiring an additional space and implementing new programs. I look forward to bringing ideas from my 8 years as Founding Director of SiteStudio to the GRCM Board Experience.”





Jessica Yon

**Jessica Yon:** Jessica Yon is Warner Norcross + Judd LLP's creative marketing and content manager who writes, designs, project manages and governs vendor relationships related to the firm's identity and brand. She oversees client communications and works with the firm's marketing team to initiate, create and implement a variety of digital and print marketing materials across multiple platforms. She works to create an identity and voice that resonates with Warner's clients and speaks true to who the firm is: one of the most established and reputable law firms in Michigan. She has a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Hope College and a certification in content strategy and copywriting from the University of Washington.

"Being a part of the Grand Rapids Children's Museum is an incredible honor," states Yon. "It speaks to my core values as a person and as an artist, and to the beliefs of Warner, where I'm employed. My parents encouraged my pursuit of the arts and play, grasping its value in developing me as a well-rounded and healthy-minded individual. Today as a parent, and as an employee, I esteem play even more. I have fostered creativity in my children, have developed a painting avocation and have chosen a workplace that inspires and encourages people to be their most authentic selves. The Grand Rapids Children's Museum is truly making a difference in the community and in the lives of children and their families. Together we will do great things!"

A full listing of the Grand Rapids Children's Museum Board includes:

**CEO:** Maggie Lancaster

**Board President:** Nick Paradiso, Michael Best Strategies

**Past Board President:** John Parker, EV Construction

**President Elect:** Jocelyn Dettloff, Mary Free Bed

**Vice President:** Benjamin Brenner, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band for Pottawatomi Indians (AKA Gun Lake Tribe) Tribal Council Member & Gun Lake Tribe Gaming Authority

**Board Treasurer & Secretary:** Erik Schumacher, Rehmann

**Member at Large:** Jason Schnelker, Schnelker, Rassi, & McConnell, PLC

**Board Members:**

Katherine (Katie) Mason Asante, Mason Jones

David Gregory, CEO & Lead Agent, Bullrush Sports

Miranda Hillard, MD, HDVCH, Corewell Health

Steve Huizinga, Freedom Construction and Consulting

Sandy Jager, Mercantile Bank

Jason Joseph, Corewell Health

Paul Lothschutz, H & S Companies

Mei Mah, Center for Educational Partnerships, GVSU

Krashawn Martin, City of Wyoming Director of Parks and Recreation

Colin Osborne, Meijer

Dale Rietberg, Varnum, LLP

Mike Rodriguez, John Grace Restoration





Kari Sherry, Community Advocate

Kelley Stoppels, Miller Johnson

Professor Emeritus Margaret Vega, Fine Artist and Founding Director of SiteStudio and Children Designing for Children

Ed Wong-Ligda, Fine Artist

Jessica Yon, Warner Norcross + Judd LLP

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### **About the Grand Rapids Children's Museum**

The Grand Rapids Children's Museum is two floors of hands-on interactive exhibits and daily drop-in programs that inspire learning through play. GRCM has been a playful destination in downtown Grand Rapids, MI for over 25 years and 4 million guests! GRCM is open Tuesdays for members from 9am-noon and to the public from noon-4pm. The museum is open to the public Thursday from 9am-7pm, Friday and Saturday from 9am-4pm, and Sunday from noon-4pm. Regular admission is \$10.00 per person and \$9.00 for ages 65+. Admission for teachers and active military members is \$8.00. Through Museums for All, admission for EBT and WIC cardholders is \$1.75 per person for up to 12 people per card. GRCM members and children under 1 are free! GRCM is a non-profit organization located at 11 Sheldon Avenue NE in downtown Grand Rapids. For more information and daily schedule of programming and events, please visit [grcm.org](http://grcm.org).



11 Sheldon Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

616.235.4726 • [grcm.org](http://grcm.org)