

# Museum makes environmental effort

By Susie Steckner  
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

When the Children's Museum of Phoenix opens next year, the star attraction, of course, will be fun.

But beyond the exhibits and activities, kids and families will find a serious environmental initiative that calls for making as many green choices as possible inside the building and out.

Joining other children's museums around the county, the Phoenix museum has adopted a "common sense green" agenda that includes everything from using non-toxic art supplies to building with earth-friendly materials to providing bike racks.

"As a children's museum leader, we have an obligation to teach that," said Debbie Gilpin, the museum's president and chief executive officer.

The museum, located in the historic Monroe School downtown, is being renovated and is on track to open next spring. The museum aims to teach through play and will focus on early childhood education and school-readiness.

This week the museum announced a donation of 840 gallons of VOC free paint from American Pride Paints, which uses paints that are low in odor, free of toxic off-gassing and don't contain chemicals that are suspected carcinogens. The environmentally friendly paint will cover about 90,000 square

## Children's Museum of Phoenix

- Located at Seventh and Van Buren streets. Renovation and restoration is ongoing. The museum is expected to reopen in spring 2008.

- The museum will feature exhibits and activities for children and their families. It will focus on learning through play, with an emphasis on early childhood education and school-readiness.

- During construction, the museum has been offering touring exhibits and activities Valley-wide through its Museum Without Walls effort.

- Information: [www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org](http://www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org) or (602) 253-0501.

feet of museum wall space.

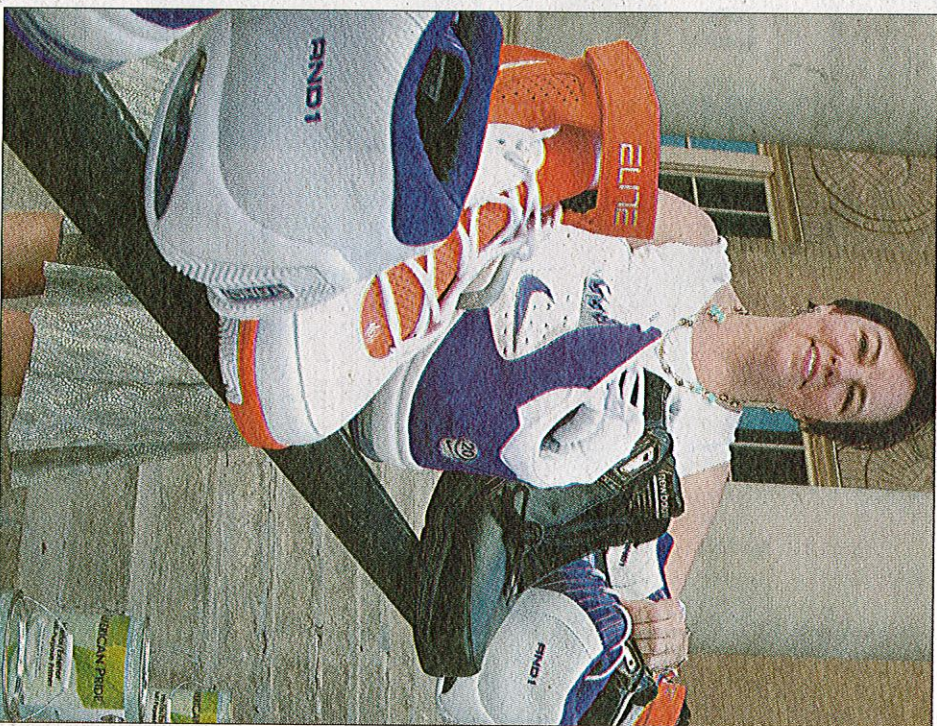
The "common sense green" agenda includes actions big and small. Efforts will include:

- Using non-toxic materials — cleaning supplies, paint, printing materials and more — throughout the building and exhibits.

- Using sustainable materials such as particleboard made of sunflower seed hulls and countertops made from recycled paper.

- Making socially responsible choices, such as looking for local vendors to reduce transportation.

- Encouraging patrons to



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Debbie Gilpin is president and chief executive officer of the Children's Museum of Phoenix, which will open next year.

make environmentally friendly choices by offering bike racks, carpool parking, recycling containers and more.

The museum also will incorporate lessons on environmental stewardship and sustainability into its programs. That may mean enlisting high school kids to make their own solar cars or asking the community to donate used items such as

shoes or blocks that can be recycled for exhibits and activities.

"We're really going all out to see how we can make it (the museum) green," said Caitlin King, a project specialist and green team captain at the museum.

Gilpin said children's museums in Pittsburgh and Madison, Wis., have had success incorporating green choices into their facilities and exhibits.

In Phoenix, the museum will mark its green choices with stickers showing a leaf and a smile. Patrons can get information on site or online about those choices.

The museum is being guided by a.k.a.Green, a self-described eco-friendly building center.

Co-owner Jeff Frost has offered a list of environmentally friendly suggestions, and the store has secured donations from its wholesalers that include water-saving faucets and toilets.

Frost said the museum's environmental effort will help educate patrons about products and materials they may not know exist. The museum will be able to showcase green building materials to people who may be skeptical about a material's look and durability.

Frost praised the museum for its green efforts, saying: "The youth will inherit what we give to them."