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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Playland-Not-at-the-Beach Opening for a One Day Sneak Preview

EL CERRITO, CA – On Saturday, October 15th Playland-Not-at-the-Beach is opening its doors for a one day sneak preview Open House -- a chance for the public to come and take a peek at what is being built on the corner of San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson Streets in El Cerrito. For the last three years volunteers under the direction of Richard Tuck, Playland's Master of Fun, have been building and designing displays and arranging artifacts commemorating the bygone days of old fashioned amusement parks. The hours will be 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission to the Open House is free.

Highlights of the Playland Open House will be:

1. The unveiling of the wondrous mural "A Playland for All" created by artist in residence Dan Fontes with the assistance of Ed Cassel. This ten foot tall masterpiece is 32 feet long and features colorful images of Laughing Sal, the old Whitney's Playland Funhouse, Sutro's Baths

and Museum, and the Cliff House. It has taken nearly a year for the creation of this masterpiece.

2. The unveiling of Laughing Sal -- Playland-Not-at-the-Beach's fat lady will leaving you weak in the knees! Created by master sculptor Chuck Jarman, CEO of Bump in the Night Productions, this animated figure was a special gift created especially for El Cerrito's Playland-Not-at-the-Beach.

3. The unveiling of the restored Marcks Family Miniature Circus. The late Don Marcks and his father Isaac spent fifty years of their lives carving from wood this immensely detailed recreation of the 1930's Sells-Floto Circus. On exhibit will be the Side Show, the Menagerie, the Big Top as well as the Cookhouse, Dressing Room Tents, and the Horse Farm.

Many artifacts from Whitney's Playland-at-the-Beach will also be on exhibit during this one-day event, and visitors will have the chance to purchase souvenirs from Playland.

Playland-Not-at-the-Beach is a family fun center / museum which commemorates the bygone amusements of the last century. This interactive wonderland far exceeds the usual connotations that go along with the idea of a museum. Besides offering its visitors authentic artifacts from the original Playland, the young—and young at heart—will be able to play games, watch live sideshows, and experience the state of mind that Playland encompassed. Children of all ages--from 2 to 100--are welcome.

“We cannot open to the public until we finish putting in some improvements to the parking lot and installing a ramp for people in wheelchairs,” says Tuck, who is the visionary behind the fun center.

“Official opening day will probably be in Spring of 2006. Completion of the required areas is dependent on volunteers and fundraising, but Tuck says, “We just couldn’t wait any further. People stop by several times a week to ask when they can come in and take a peek at our progress. Now we have a special date set aside for all our neighbors to visit. It should be a lot of fun!”

Playland is restricted to no more than 49 people at a time going through during the Open House, so Tuck recommends calling ahead and making a reservation so as to avoid standing in line. Tuck’s direct line is (510) 232-4264 x25. “Or a better solution is to become a “Friend of Playland” which gives the visitor preferential entrance. Becoming a “Friend” costs \$25 for a one year membership and will be good for 365 days after the official Opening Date.

“Once we have all our final city permits, Playland will be open to the public, but we will schedule special events for those who are in the most need of a day of fun: at-risk children of all ages, the economically disadvantaged, senior groups, and the physically and developmentally challenged” Tuck explains.

“The Grand Opening can happen a lot sooner if we have volunteer power to finish building displays” says Margo Strupeck, Volunteer Coordinator. Playland is available for volunteer work Monday through Saturday.

For more information please contact Margo Strupeck at (510) 232-4264 x30.

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