

ABOUT ROCCO

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ROCCO FIORENTINO, 11, IS HONORED ... PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM'S "GREAT FRIEND TO KIDS AWARDS"

PHILADELPHIA, PA – It's pretty staggering to think a young boy, who is blind, could make such an impression on New Jersey State Legislators when he was only five years old and then eight years of age that \$1.2 million would become dedicated to Braille services and education for students in New Jersey. But, that's the impact that Rocco Fiorentino had on these politicians. And, serving as an ambassador for The Little Rock Foundation, he has made an equally impressive impact on students and adults throughout the region advocating for more services for the blind and educating others about the life of a blind person.

This gifted boy, who is also a talented singer and musician, is now 11 years old. A Voorhees, New Jersey resident, he is being honored in the Young Achiever division by Please Touch Museum, the children's museum of Philadelphia, at the 12th Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards, that recognizes individuals and organizations making outstanding contributions to enriching the lives of children. The awards will be presented at a ceremony at The Union League of Philadelphia on Thursday, November 15, beginning at 11:30 a.m. The 12th Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards is presented by Comcast and all proceeds will support Please Touch Museum's exhibits and programs for young children and their families.

"There are six individuals and organizations recognized this year are truly Great Friends to Kids," says Nancy Kolb, President and CEO of Please Touch Museum. "They have inspired, served, educated, entertained and enriched the lives of children, and by recognizing their efforts we hope to inspire others to make similar efforts in the community."

This year's winners are:
Susan Shea (Philanthropy)

Elliot L. Shelkrot, President and Director, The Free Library of Philadelphia (Education)

Rocco Fiorentino (Young Achiever)

Philadelphia Mural Arts Program (Arts)

Germaine Ingram, Esq. (Community Service)

Carter and Pat Merbreier, aka “Captain and Mrs. Noah” (Lifetime Achievement)

The lunchtime ceremony will include a short video featuring each recipient and their contribution to the community. Each of the winners will be presented with a special award designed by Philadelphia artist Leo Sewell, creator of Please Touch Museum’s own “Artie the Elephant” and the Statue of Liberty Arm & Torch now being constructed for the new Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall.

The Great Friend to Kids Award was initiated in 1991 by the Association of Children’s Museums to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions toward strengthening education for children. National Great Friend to Kids Award winners include Fred Rogers and Marian Wright Edelman. Please Touch began presenting its own award in 1996 to coincide with the museum’s 20th birthday. Past winners include the Philadelphia Eagles Youth Partnership; Sheryl Leach, creator of Barney, the cuddly six-foot purple dinosaur; Carolyn Johnson, Founder and Executive Director of the National Adoption Center; and Alex Scott, Founder of Alex’s Lemonade Stand.

The presenting sponsor of Please Touch Museum’s 12th Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards is Comcast. Media sponsors are The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Daily News, and philly.com. Magazine sponsor is Philadelphia Magazine.

Tickets to the 12th Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards are still available. To purchase tickets, please contact Stephanie Lim Capello at 215-963-0667, ext. 3159 or e-mail at scapello@pleasetouchmuseum.org.

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Please Touch Museum® is dedicated to enriching the lives of children by providing learning opportunities through play. Recognized locally and nationally as one of the best children’s museums, Please Touch is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Admission is

\$10.95 for adults and children age one and over. Children under one are free. For more information, please call 215-963-0667, or visit www.pleasetouchmuseum.org.