

JULY 11, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Real World and Virtual World Meet at The Field Museum
Press Conference on August 11

Chicago's Field Museum and KidsCom.com are pleased to announce the launch of *Animal Adventure* – a museum-based experience recreated in a family-focused virtual world. *Animal Adventure* addresses issues such as climate change and local biodiversity to encourage young people to take an active role in their environment and be responsible global citizens.

A press conference will be held at The Field Museum on Aug. 11 at 10:30am to celebrate the official opening of the new virtual experience. On hand will be kids who have beta tested *Animal Adventure* in KidsCom.com and taken a corresponding museum-based scavenger hunt.

Animal Adventure leverages technologies that adolescents and young adults are adept at using in order to engage them in current issues. *Animal Adventure* targets “tween” audiences who range in age from 8 to 13 years old.

“The dedication of The Field Museum to adopt virtual world technologies to educate new audiences about subjects critical to our futures is truly impressive,” stated Jori Clarke, president of Circle 1 Network, the parent company of KidsCom.com. “I am honored to be part of such a forward-thinking approach to developing the knowledge and understanding of the issues we are facing as a worldwide community.”

KidsCom.com's Idea Seeker Universe includes multiple locations on imaginary planets that face many of the issues the Earth faces today. In *Animal Adventure* kids are taught about local Illinois biodiversity, including rare wetland ecosystems and the challenges facing them. Kids work to identify the adaptations that make wetland ecosystems unique, and develop strategies for solving problems that threaten wetlands, such as illegal dumping and habitat destruction.

“We are pleased to be collaborating with KidsCom.com to educate over 1.5 million adolescents about environmental responsibility,” said Dr. Elizabeth Babcock, Director of Education and Library Collections of The Field Museum. Krystal Villanosa, Administrator of Marketing and Funding in Education adds, “Collaboration between The Field Museum and KidsCom.com has brought leading educational tools to young audiences focused on the critical issue of environmental responsibility.”

As part of the launch on Aug. 11, Field Museum visitors can take part in a virtual and “real” scavenger hunt at The Field Museum and on the www.KidsCom.com site. Speakers from KidsCom.com, The Field Museum and other organizations will share their visions for *Animal Adventure*. In addition, KidsCom.com will announce the winners of

its contest to name two “junior” reporters for the Chicago area who will cover news of interest on global climate change on the KidsCom.com Web site.

About KidsCom.com

As one of the first social networking virtual worlds designed specifically for tweens and their families, KidsCom.com is a fun place where kids meet online to Play Smart, Stay Safe, Have Fun™. Visitors are taught to work as teams in order to face challenges and combat an evil force called the “Darkness of Dumbness.” They also learn how to depend on helpful forces, such as virtual pet Plant Babies™ that represent positive virtues for kids. It’s a virtual world where kids can entertain and express themselves as they take part in adventures on social issues and develop skills and character traits such as patience, persistence and gratitude to help them be successful in the real world. On KidsCom.com, kids can customize their own avatar characters, take their avatar characters on learning adventure expeditions online and off-line, chat with old friends and meet new ones as they explore the Idea Seeker Universe, make their own eco-friendly “green” houses, play games, nurture virtual pets and create their own social networking pages in a virtual world free of graphic violence, mindless entertainment and negative stereotypes. KidsCom.com is published by Circle 1 Network, LLC. The site is located at www.kidscom.com

About The Field Museum

Chicago's Field Museum is one of the world's great museums of science, environment, culture and a focus of public learning and scholarly research. It's a treasury of more than 23 million objects including ancient mummies, endangered plants and animals and Sue, the largest and most complete *T. rex* ever found. Above all, The Field Museum is an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages.

#

NOTE TO EDITORS: Jori Clarke, kids from the site, and Krystal Villanosa are available for interviews and a demo of the game can be arranged. High-res images of Jori Clarke and the game are available upon request.

Contacts:

Jeanne Klescewski
414.271.5437
jeanne.klescewski@circle1network.com

Emily Waldren
312.665.7107
ewaldren@fieldmuseum.org