



## WTTW Kids/Spiffy Pictures Partners with Kohl Children's Museum on Traveling NATURE CAT Exhibit

NATURE CAT: BACKYARD AND BEYOND invites kids and families to explore an immersive museum exhibit based on the wildly popular, award-winning PBS Kids series NATURE CAT

CHICAGO – May 20, 2019 – WTTW Public Media has partnered with [Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago \(KCM\)](#) and [Spiffy Pictures](#), creators of the popular PBS animated kids' series NATURE CAT, to create the new traveling exhibit NATURE CAT: BACKYARD AND BEYOND. The exhibit, developed for kids ages 2-10 and their families, encourages children to explore the natural world. The exhibit will celebrate its grand opening on July 30, 2019 at Kohl Children's Museum and run through January 26, 2020 before beginning a nationwide tour.

NATURE CAT: BACKYARD AND BEYOND will inspire families and children to understand that nature discovery can happen anywhere – even in their own backyards. The 1,500-2,000 square foot exhibit will be designed by KCM staff with in collaboration with KCM's Program Advisory Council, Spiffy Pictures, and WTTW. The team will use its 20+ years of exhibit design to create an environment in which visitors can work through a series of engaging investigations in different natural settings. Different areas of the exhibit will provide opportunities to learn about nature, use math skills to explore the natural world, use tools to investigate environments, and work and play together to create, explore and accomplish tasks.

The exhibit will offer several distinct interactive learning experience areas featuring Nature Cat and his friends: Hal, the happy-go-lucky dog; Squeeks, the intrepid mouse; Daisy, the brainy bunny; and Nature Cat's nemesis Ronald, the cat next door. Environments to explore include:

- **The Backyard:** A host of activity sitting just on the edge of the forest, the backyard includes Hal's funky doghouse where visitors can take shelter from the rainy weather and learn how to "play it safe" while using counting skills to measure the time between thunder claps and lightning flashes. Outside, Daisy invites visitors to try their hand at planting a garden of vegetables and flowers in creative, recycled containers such as tires, soda bottles and even boots!
- **The Marsh:** Visitors can hop aboard Squeeks' cousin Marvin's raft, overlooking a "panoramic view" of a lush and thriving marsh. Kids can practice environmental stewardship by helping Marvin and his friends sort and clean up the trash polluting their homes, using the nearby recycling bins. Seen through telescopes around the Marsh, Ronald invites visitors to try out his slide, just a short climb up the hill.
- **The Cave:** Guests can join Hal in the search for Harold, his lost flying disc, and explore the world beneath the earth's surface. After putting on safety helmets, cave-explorers can trace the flow of water in and out of the cave and observe a variety of critters in the dim light – an eyeless salamander, bats overhead, and glow worms pulsing in a rhythmic light display.
- **The Forest:** Visitors are invited into an intimate space inside of a vibrant forest, where they can explore a hollowed-out den in the base of a large tree, crawl into a rotting log to discover the many creatures it plays home to, and see a vernal pond at their feet.

NATURE CAT airs on two WTTW broadcast channels (WTTW11 and WTTW/PBS Kids 24-7) and streams on [wttw.com/kids](http://wttw.com/kids). The series follows Fred (voiced by *Saturday Night Live* alum Taran Killam), a house cat who dreams of exploring the great outdoors. In each episode, once his family leaves for the day, Fred transforms into Nature Cat, "backyard explorer extraordinaire." With the help of his animal friends, voiced by *Saturday Night*

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*Live's* Kate McKinnon (Squeeks) and Bobby Moynihan (Hal); *Sesame Street's* Chris Knowings (Ronald); and Kate Micucci (Daisy) of *Scrubs* and *The Big Bang Theory*, Nature Cat embarks on action-packed adventures full of nature investigation.

"We are excited to watch kids and families interacting with our NATURE CAT characters," said David Rudman, who with his brother Adam created and produces NATURE CAT for Spiffy Pictures. "Our goal with the series was always to encourage kids to have fun, hands-on experiences with nature, and this exhibit will do just that."

"We strive to make WTTW content come alive and be experiential for our youngest audiences, and this exhibit delivers on that goal," said Dan Soles, WTTW Senior VP and Chief Television Officer.

"I am incredibly proud of the talented team at Kohl Children's Museum who designed the concepts and elements for this new exhibit," said Mike Delfini, President and CEO of Kohl Children's Museum. "This is a perfect example of how the Museum partners with other leaders in the field of early childhood education to bring memorable learning experiences to children and their families."

The **NATURE CAT: BACKYARD AND BEYOND** exhibit is sponsored by The Hamill Family Foundation. Major funding for the NATURE CAT series is provided by the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#) and the Van Eekeren Family, founders of [Land O'Frost](#). For rental fees and availability of the exhibit, please contact David Hanke at (847) 832-6880 or [dhanke@kcmgc.org](mailto:dhanke@kcmgc.org).

#### **About WTTW**

[WTTW](#) is the PBS member station in Chicago, committed to creating and presenting unique media content across distinct television and digital channels – WTTW11, WTTW Prime, WTTW Create/WTTW World, WTTW PBS Kids 24/7, [wttw.com](http://wttw.com) and the PBS/WTTW video app. Recognized for award-winning journalism and local productions such as *Chicago Tonight*, *Chicago River Tour*, *Check, Please!*, digital-first series *Urban Nature* and *Foodphiles* and national productions *10 That Changed America* and *Nature Cat*, WTTW presents the very best in public affairs, arts and culture, nature and science, history and documentary, and children's public media content. Connect with WTTW on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

#### **About Spiffy Pictures**

[Spiffy Pictures](#), founded in 2003 by David and Adam Rudman, is a creative development and production company specializing in family entertainment. The Emmy Award-winning creative team has created, produced, written and directed live-action and animated projects for PBS Kids, Nickelodeon, Disney, MTV, Comedy Central, Sesame Street and Warner Brothers. Projects include creating and producing the Emmy & Prix Jeunesse-nominated *Jack's Big Music Show* for Nick Jr, the Emmy-nominated *Bunnytown* for Disney and Nick Jr.'s Parent's Choice Award-winning *Curious Buddies* brand of home videos. Spiffy Pictures has also produced a puppet adaptation of *Scooby Doo* for Warner Brothers, titled *Scooby-Doo! Adventures, The Mystery Map*. Spiffy's current animated production *Nature Cat* premiered on PBS Kids on November 25, 2015.

#### **About Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago**

Offering 17 interactive, hands-on exhibits for children age's birth to 8, the Museum's mission is to encourage young children to become effective learners through self-directed play. In recognition for its outstanding exhibits and impact on Chicagoland families, Kohl Children's Museum was recently named one of the country's Ten Best Children's Museums by *Parents Magazine*. Kohl Children's Museum is located at 2100 Patriot Blvd. in Glenview, IL, at the corner of Patriot Blvd. and W. Lake Ave. in The Glen. For more information, visit the Museum's website at [kcmgc.org](http://kcmgc.org) or call (847) 832-6600.

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