



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 1, 2023**

## ***Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light* Tree Lighting Festival Kicks Off Holiday Season at MSI**

Museum of Science Industry hosts an after-hours adults-only Christmas party, winter break camps, snowy experiences, and more this holiday season.



CHICAGO — The [Museum of Science and Industry](#)'s annual holiday spectacle, *Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light*, is set to open November 18, 2023, with a ceremonial tree lighting and community-focused festival. Themed around the science of snow, this year's annual holiday show will feature the photographic work of a snowflake scientist and will be accompanied by a range of on-site programs and events for all ages.

Santa Larry—the first Black Santa hired to spread holiday cheer at the Mall of America—will join MSI's Vice President of Education and Chief Learning and Community Partnerships Officer Jessica Chavez on Saturday, November 18 to **flip the switch on the Museum's four-story Grand Tree at 11 a.m.** The day-long celebration also includes a meet-and-greet with a Chicago Cubs player courtesy of Coca-Cola, activities from Sloomoo Institute, story time with Chicago Public Libraries, and live performances from local cultural institutions represented throughout the exhibit.

The *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light* exhibit, which runs through January 7, 2024, features a forest of more than 50 trees and displays decorated by volunteers to represent the holiday traditions from cultures around the globe. It's a one-of-a-kind experience that brings together a whole world of holiday joy under one roof.

Additional holiday programs and events will take place throughout the remainder of 2023, including:

- **Naughty or Nice 21+ After Hours Event:** No matter which list you end up on this year, you can still celebrate at this 21-and-up after-hours holiday party. On Friday, December 15 from 6 to 10 p.m. guests are invited to grab a seasonal cocktail or some hot cocoa, take a selfie with Santa or Krampus, and explore the Museum after it's been closed to the public. [Tickets](#) cost \$35 (\$30 for members) and include free parking.
- **Holiday Market:** The MSI Holiday Market offers seasonal treats throughout the run of *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Lights*. Head to Yesterday's Main Street and stop by the festive cart featuring freshly roasted and candied nuts, hot chocolate or mulled apple cider, and chocolate chip cookies. Whether you leave those treats out for Santa or keep them for yourself is up to you. In the mood for more holiday shopping? Check out [MSI's gift guide](#) and on-site shops to find stocking stuffers and gifts for the family.
- **Photos with Santa and the Grand Tree:** Create a holiday keepsake right at the Museum! Santa will be available for photos Fridays through Sundays between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the weeks leading up to Christmas and everyday December 15-24 during the same hours. Guests can buy timed tickets to meet Santa on [MSI's website](#) and choose from three different photo packages ranging in price from \$25 to \$65. The same goes for photos in front of the Grand Tree in the rotunda, which will be standing and ready for its closeup every day through the end of the exhibit's run.
- **Winter Break Camps:** Students in 6th through 8th grades are invited to learn about winter science around the globe with [MSI World Tour Winter Break Camps](#). Inspired by *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light*, these three-day camps—running December 27-29, 2023, and January 3-5, 2024—offer hands-on STEAM activities run by MSI's Education team and a chance to explore the entire Museum.
- **Antarctica at the Giant Dome Theater:** Experience the snowy tundra of Antarctica on a five-story screen in this film narrated by Benedict Cumberbatch. *Antarctica* features never-before-seen footage of the farthest reaches of the majestic continent and the weird and wonderful creatures that live there. [Get tickets here](#) to see the film in the Giant Dome Theater from November 18 through January 7, 2024.

- **Snowflake Science by Caltech Physicist Ken Libbrecht:** Themed around the science of snow, this year's *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light* exhibit will feature photographs of real snowflakes, taken by a physicist from Caltech, Ken Libbrecht. [The snowflake artwork](#) will be on display in MSI's Lower Court and featured on exhibit artwork in MSI's Rotunda.
- **Experience the Magic of Snowfall:** Every 30 minutes, Museum guests can experience the magic of snowfall (note: fake snow) amid Christmas trees in the Museum's North Court, near the Grand Tree. After all, what's better than a white Christmas and holiday season?

For more information about the exhibit, visit [MSI's website](#) or contact Brianna Wellen, [brianna.wellen@msichicago.org](mailto:brianna.wellen@msichicago.org).

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### **About the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI):**

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences which inspire the inventive genius in everyone. As one of the largest science museums in the world, from groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits to hands-on opportunities — a visit to MSI is guaranteed to connect fun and learning. MSI is committed to offering comprehensive educational programs — for students, teachers, and families — that make a difference in local communities and contribute to MSI's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in STEAM: science, technology, engineering, art and math. The Museum is grateful for the support of its generous donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit [msichicago.org](http://msichicago.org) or call (773) 684-1414.