



Hands On
Children's Museum
INSPIRED LEARNING FOR ALL
WSECU



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 2025

HOCM Contact: Beth Garson, (360) 956-0818

bgarson@hocm.org

LOTT Contact: Jocelyn Bonilla, (360) 528-5739

jocelynbonilla@lottcleanwater.org

Hands On Children's Museum & LOTT's WET Science Center Receive Best of South Sound Award

The Hands On Children's Museum and the LOTT Clean Water Alliance's WET Science Center are proud to announce that they have each been recognized with Best of South Sound awards for their exceptional contributions to the community and their dedication to creating welcoming, family-friendly spaces. Presented by The Olympian, the awards celebrate outstanding businesses across the South Sound as voted on by the community. The Hands On Children's Museum and WET Science Center earned gold and silver respectively in the Museum category.

The Hands On Children's Museum, the most visited children's museum in the Pacific Northwest, was also recognized as a top venue for children's birthday parties, a leading family attraction, and for its popular summer camp program. The museum welcomes about 300,000 visitors annually, drawing families from across the country and around the world.

"The Museum is so honored to receive the Best of South Sound Awards and we are delighted to share the support of our entire community with our partner, LOTT's WET Science Center," shared Hands On Children's Museum Chief Executive Director Patty Belmonte. "Together the Museum, the WET Center and the East Bay Plaza form a beautiful collection of learning spaces centered on early science and art learning, along with nature play and a focus on the importance of water in our region."

The WET Science Center is owned and operated by the LOTT Clean Water Alliance, a nonprofit corporation providing wastewater management services for the urban areas of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County. WET stands for water, education and technology. The WET Center serves as a free destination for community members to learn about the water cycle, LOTT's wastewater treatment process, reclaimed water and clean water careers. This year, the WET Center was voted silver in the Museums category for the 2025 Best of South Sound survey.

"This award reflects our commitment to proactively engaging and educating our visitors," shared LOTT's Executive Director Matt Kennelly. "The longstanding and special relationship between LOTT and the

Hands On Children's Museum continues to create opportunities for both of our organizations in STEM, environmental support and community engagement."

The East Bay Public Plaza, located in front of the museum, is a LOTT-owned property that was developed as a joint project between LOTT, the museum, the City of Olympia and the Port of Olympia. The partners collaborated to create a space where people could come together to enjoy the waterfront, take advantage of new learning opportunities and access public services. Their shared vision of improving public spaces, strengthening community ties and providing learning centers have made a lasting impact in Thurston County and beyond.

For more information, visit www.hocm.org, www.wetsciencecenter.org, or www.lottcleanwater.org.

###