

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Growing Up X Exhibition Opens at the Illinois State Museum**

*Attention finally paid to long-overlooked Generation X*

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois State Museum (ISM) shines a spotlight on Generation X with the opening of its new exhibition, *Growing Up X*, on Saturday at its downtown location.

The exhibition explores the toys, technologies and cultural touchstones surrounding Gen Xers in their childhood. Museum visitors will see items familiar to anyone who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, from telephones with cords, record and cassette players, and an Apple IIe computer to Teddy Ruxpin and parachute pants. Additionally, they will learn how growing up in the shadow of the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the AIDS crisis and the War on Drugs shaped Gen Xers as individuals and a generation.

For those looking to immerse themselves in the experience of “growing up X,” the exhibition offers an interactive rec room space where visitors can sit on a floral sofa, watch a movie on VHS, play a video game, or listen to a record album or cassette tape. The exhibition also includes a jukebox where visitors can dial up their favorite nostalgic tunes and interactive screens to watch commercials and news broadcasts from the '70s and '80s.

“We’re excited about this exhibition,” said ISM Curator of History Erika Holst. “We hope Gen X feels seen by this show – that they come in and say ‘I had that!’ or ‘I remember that!’ Beyond that, we hope this sparks some great conversations between Gen Xers and their kids and parents about different experiences had by different generations growing up.”

More than 1,000 results from a public survey the Museum sent out last year inform the exhibition with the inclusion of insights, quotes, photographs and loaned objects from Gen Xers.

“One of the challenges of doing this show is how to accurately represent the experiences of a group of people that is large, diverse and still very much alive,” Holst said. “So we went right to the source and asked Gen Xers to share their experiences in their own words, images and meaningful objects.”

A unique feature of the exhibition is a section called “A Generation of eXcellence,” which looks at the Gen X high school experience through the lens of Chicago’s Robert Lindblom Technical High School (now called the Robert Lindblom Math and Science Academy). Photos,

memorabilia and recollections from Lindblom alumni shed light on what it was like to attend a selective-enrollment high school for the first generation born after the civil rights movement.

*Growing Up X* is on display at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield Jan. 28, 2023, through Sept. 4, 2023. Admission is free. Learn more at [www.illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://www.illinoisstatemuseum.org).

### **About the Illinois State Museum**

Established in 1877, the Illinois State Museum is a dynamic institution that inspires the exploration of Illinois' past and present to inform and enrich everyday life and promote stewardship of cultural and natural resources. Headquartered in Springfield with branch facilities in Lewistown and Lockport, ISM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and a proud member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

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