



OPENING APRIL 22 AT THE  
**CALIFORNIA MUSEUM**



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Carolyn Becker, (916) 769-7976  
[cbecker@mercuryllc.com](mailto:cbecker@mercuryllc.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 22, 2015

## **NEW EXHIBIT CELEBRATING IMMIGRANTS UNVEILED, FIRST EXHIBIT OF NEW CALIFORNIA UNITY CENTER**

*Interactive 20-Foot Video Wall Features Personal Stories of Immigrants And Video Kiosks Allows Visitors to Share Their Own Stories*

**Sacramento, Calif.,** (April 22, 2015) – A new interactive exhibit celebrating immigrants in California opens today Wednesday, April 22 at The California Museum in Sacramento. Developed in partnership with The California Endowment, *We Are All Californians* brings first-person stories to life using video presented on a 20-foot-long multimedia wall.

Visitors get a unique experience as immigrants, both documented and undocumented, share personal stories about their immigration journey, its impact on their health and well-being, and their bountiful contributions to California. The exhibit is the first installment of the Museum’s forthcoming project “California Unity Center,” a 4,000-square-foot gallery dedicated to educating visitors about California’s civil rights history and cultural diversity, scheduled for completion in 2017.

“We are excited to create the California Unity Center for Sacramento. This exhibit on immigration is the first of many new exhibits that will eventually make up the Unity Center,” said Dori Moorehead, Executive Director of The California Museum. “What *We Are All Californians* teaches us is that while the faces of immigrants to California have changed over the years, a lot of their struggles have not. The exhibit reveals how the changing face of California will continue to shape the state’s future.”

"This exhibit provides a platform to lift up the importance of inclusion and equality for all Californians, no matter where they come from," said Daniel Zingale, a Senior Vice President for The California Endowment, the state's largest public health foundation which sponsored *We Are All Californians*. "Immigrants are a key part of our workforce and economy, yet one million undocumented Californians are still blocked from access to quality, affordable health care, which is a basic human right. A health care system that excludes anyone hurts everyone."

*We Are All Californians* features nine immigrants from all over the world, including Bangladesh, Ukraine, Cambodia, Guatemala, Eritrea and Mexico. Visitors are invited to walk next to the immigrants along the video wall and, with a giant touch-screen, select which stories they'd like to learn more about. The immigrants share their own stories – sometimes emotional – in short video clips, talking about why they left their home countries, how they arrived and settled in California, what everyday life is like, and what dreams they have for their future.

"I think [Americans] do not realize how lucky [they] are to have a Bill of Rights that never change[d] for 200 years. That's a big, big thing to have," says Bronislava "Slava" Sommer in a video clip. Slava is 46 years old, and came to California from Ukraine in 1999 to get married. "It means that everyone has equal rights... You'll be who you'd like to be."

Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, face many challenges and negative public perceptions. But like every immigrant who has come to California, they are human and are here in pursuit of a better life.

In another clip, Mario de Leon, a 30-year-old math teacher from Los Angeles talks about what life has been like since coming to California from Guatemala at age 9. "As an undocumented immigrant, I personally had to go through this identity process to really understand myself. It wasn't until I was in high school that I realized how difficult and different of a journey I would have than my peers who were born here," he says. "I think I'm still reconciling with that idea of what it means to be an American and whether I can define myself as an American."

*We Are All Californians* also features two adjoining video kiosks, offering visitors the opportunity to record a 60-second video "selfie" or watch clips of other visitors' own California stories, sharing narratives on how they arrived in California. Beginning in June, highlights of visitors' California stories will also be made available on the Museum's YouTube channel at <http://tinyurl.com/CA-Stories>.

*We Are All Californians* will be one of the Museum's signature exhibits, which includes *California Hall of Fame*, *Constitution Wall*, and *Health Happens Here*.

###

### **About The California Museum**

A self-supporting 501(c)3 non-profit, The California Museum — home of the California Hall of Fame — engages, educates and enlightens people about California's rich history and unique contributions to the world through ideas, innovation, the arts and culture. Through interactive and innovative experiences, the Museum inspires visitors to dream the California dream and dares them to make their own mark on history. Open Tues.-Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Bank of America Sun. of the month: 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays (except on federal holidays). Admission: adults \$9.00; college students & seniors \$7.50 with valid ID; youth 6-17: \$7.00; children 5 and under free. For more information, visit CaliforniaMuseum.org.

### **About The California Endowment**

The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental affordable improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in Sacramento, Oakland, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. The Endowment challenges the conventional wisdom that medical settings and individual choices are solely responsible for people's health. Through its 'Health Happens Here' campaign and ten-year initiative for Building Healthy Communities, The Endowment is creating places where children are healthy, safe and ready to learn. At its core, The Endowment believes that health happens in neighborhoods, schools, and with prevention. For more information, visit The California Endowment's homepage at [www.calendow.org](http://www.calendow.org)