

## Miami Children's Museum Lights Up the Sky

Written by Erik Bojnansky - BT Senior Writer  
December 2013

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**From the MacArthur Causeway you can't miss it, even if you wanted to**



Jeff Berkowitz is a very busy man.

His company, Berkowitz Development Group, owns and runs six shopping malls in Miami-Dade County -- three in Kendall (including Dadeland Station), one in Coral Gables (Gables Station), one in Miami Beach (5th and Alton), and one in Aventura (Aventura Commons).

He's also preparing to get into the observation-tower business. Last month Berkowitz announced he's planning to build a 1000-foot-tall structure called SkyRise at Bayside Marketplace in downtown Miami.

Instead of condos and offices, the \$250 million, Arquitectonica-designed towering hairpin (to be financed by foreign investors wishing to obtain residence in the United States) will have a couple of amusement rides; a "flying" movie theater, where viewers will feel like they're soaring over parts of South Florida; observation decks with views of Biscayne Bay and the skylines of Miami and Miami Beach; and other features.

If the City of Miami's planners sign off on the concept, and Berkowitz succeeds in finalizing a

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lease deal with Bayside operator General Growth Properties, the project will break ground in mid- 2014 and be completed in mid-2017.

“When it’s built, it will be the tallest building in Miami and the tallest building on the Eastern seaboard south of Atlanta,” Berkowitz tells the *BT*. “It’ll be the second-tallest observation tower in the country, behind Las Vegas’s Stratosphere; and the 87th-tallest building in the world. It’s going to be an icon, Miami’s Eiffel tower.”

But you don’t have to wait to see a downtown bayfront spectacle. Just head across the MacArthur Causeway toward Miami or Miami Beach. Either way, you can’t miss it on Watson Island, even with all the construction related to the billion-dollar PortMiami tunnel.



Pulsating on the façade of the Miami Children’s Museum are three LED billboards -- one on the west side and two on the east side -- that are big enough and bright enough to catch the eye of even the most distracted driver.

Last month these billboards flashed advertisements for Norwegian Cruise Line, the Dominican Republic, Interjet airline trips to Mexico City, and events at the Miami Children’s Museum itself.

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The board chairman of the nonprofit museum and charter school is none other than Jeff Berkowitz.

Insisting that he's merely a volunteer, Berkowitz says the billboards will generate income to enable the MCM to enhance its exhibits and operate for decades to come. "The billboards will help us stay forever as a wonderful institution," he says.

Publicist Woody Graber asserts that the billboards primarily promote events at the museum and those of its partners. "In a highly competitive educational and entertainment market, we need every tool available to make our programs and exhibits visible to our target audience," Graber says in an e-mail. "Our content and those of our partner institutions will be generously displayed in rotation, and it becomes an important component of our marketing package."

As for the revenue from purely commercial ads, Graber says the money "will be reinvested in our institution to provide an even more engaging experience for the nearly half-million children and families we serve each year."

The MCM also won't allow tasteless or offensive advertising on its signs, Graber insists: "First and foremost, the Miami Children's Museum has total and complete control over content that can be displayed on this billboard. We will never allow advertising that is objectionable to our family environment and that of our patrons. This includes alcoholic beverages, adult material, cigarettes (which we believe are not allowed anyway), personal hygiene items, and other controversial products. We will further not allow political and electioneering advertising. No advertisement can appear on this billboard unless we have first approved it!"

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