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### All Aboard the Enchanted Express Cheekwood Estate & Gardens Expanded Trains Exhibit Opens June 14

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – “Garden railways grown from the earth” perfectly describes the Enchanted Express, a new expansion of the train exhibit at Cheekwood Estate & Gardens. The Enchanted Express railway station and three additional tracks make up the immersive installation located just uphill of the existing trains layout. Lending to its surroundings in nature, the architecture of a traditional train station combines with the features of a tree to create a “grown from the earth” look and feel. The new train station will transport and introduce children of all ages to a secret garden and charming forest with animal and insect residents that cohabitate together in the ecosystem.

The exhibit is a first-of-its kind, completely unique concept from our nationally known company,” says Laura Busse Dolan, President and CEO of Applied Imagination, and one of the designers behind the installation. “Nowhere else in the world can this display be seen!”

Over 235 feet of track has been added to the original layout, with three new track loops, for a total of 1,035 linear feet. The train line will run from the exterior and pass through the interior of the station. On each side there are two child-sized tunnels leading to an observation dome offering an up-close and immersive worm’s-eye view of the garden and forest.

Once children journey inside the enchanted tree, they are met with six storybook panels, each one themed to express the characteristics of a garden or forest friend and their habitat. There are several multi-sensory learning opportunities to engage throughout the experience including various nature and animal sounds, buttons that trigger lights in animal homes, and animal tracks that go to and from the garden and forest.

“The train exhibit at Cheekwood brings joy to visitors of all ages, and this new, interactive expansion adds yet another immersive experience that is both enjoyable and educational,” says Cheekwood President & CEO Jane MacLeod. The Enchanted Express opens on June 14.

*The train expansion is made possible by the generosity of Jim Crossman.*

### **About Applied Imagination**

Unique to the world of garden railways, Applied Imagination’s installations have garnered nationwide acclaim for over 30 years. Inspiring audiences of all ages through our inventive use of botanical materials to create iconic architectural models and sculptures, perfectly paired with universally beloved G scale model trains that transport visitors to an immersive celebration of the natural world.

The botanical artworks and model railroad displays are created at Applied Imagination located in the rolling hills of Alexandria, Kentucky just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. Founder Paul Busse is retired, and his artistic vision lives on, continuing to elevate through their inspired creative team under the direction of Busse’s daughter, Laura Busse Dolan, President/CEO and Stephanie Winters, Creative Director (M.Arch) alongside a team of 15 full-time artisans and fabricators.

### **About Cheekwood**

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children’s Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a three-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden and in 2021 was recognized by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation depending on the season. Check [cheekwood.org](http://cheekwood.org) for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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Featured image: The original TRAINS! exhibit at Cheekwood, 2019. Photo by Caitlin Harris.

Images for Media:

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/628bc12f2cff8e0012f7b3fa>

**Media Contact**

Kim Hugo

Director of Marketing, Cheekwood

khugo@cheekwood.org

615.353.6985