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The Giant Heart: Revived and Pumped for Valentine's Day

New Vibrant Colors • Human Heart Beating from Within • Walkthrough Video
Beating Heart Surgery Video • Modernized Dissection Area • World's Largest Map of Philadelphia

The Franklin Institute Reveals a Fresh Updated Giant Heart and Surrounding Bioscience Exhibit

PHILADELPHIA, PA February 13, 2020—The Franklin Institute's giant walk-through heart, a Philadelphia landmark since its opening in 1954, has a fresh look for 2020, upgraded and enhanced with entirely new and vividly-detailed allover paint, both inside and out—plus improved lighting and dynamic audio now featuring a human's heartbeat from within, and soon a video tour of the full experience designed for all guests. With enhancements complete, the Heart is now pumping again, just in time for Valentine's Day.

The 5,000 square-foot exhibit surrounding the Heart pulses with refreshed interactives and information about heart anatomy and physiology, personal health and wellness, and public health, including:

- ❑ A vibrant, colorful new look for the two-story Giant Heart—primed and painted by local artists Evan Lovett and Jake Taylor from [V.U.R.T. Creative](#), as well as V.U.R.T. artist Alysia Mackenzie who hand-painted red blood cells that line the gallery wall.
- ❑ New sounds of an actual human heart beating throughout the chambers, replacing the previous computer-generated sound effect. The distinct heartbeat, provided by **Johns Hopkins Medicine**, delivers varying beats that are integrated within the different chambers to reflect a heart more true-to-life.
- ❑ A modernized Heart Bar, where live heart and eye dissections take place daily, and can now be shown in greater detail, to more visitors, on an elevated projection wall.
- ❑ An intricate beating heart surgery video, courtesy of **Lankenau Heart Institute**.
- ❑ A new floor installation of the world's largest map of Philadelphia acquired from the former **Philadelphia History Museum** and now located next to the Giant Heart, helps guests visualize geographic disparities between Philadelphia neighborhoods that affect heart health, including access to healthy food, neighborhood walkability, and smoking.

Built in 1953 as a temporary exhibit, the Giant Heart (28-feet wide and 18-feet high, 4-tons*, and 100 times the width of a human heart) opened to the public on January 29, 1954, as *The Engine of Life*. Originally scheduled to remain open for only several months, the Heart's immediate and enormous popularity convinced the Institute to make the exhibition permanent.

“To this day it remains the museum’s most popular exhibit, continually giving new generations of visitors that uniquely memorable experience of “walking through the Giant Heart,” said **Larry Dubinski, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute**. “Whether it’s your first or your fiftieth time walking through the Heart, this is a fresh experience that we believe everyone will love.”

The two-phase project began in October 2019; painting of the Heart took two weeks to complete in January-February 2020. The last full renovation of the Giant Heart and gallery took place in 2004, to mark the Heart’s 50th anniversary.

“I’m honored to be invited back to The Franklin Institute after the completion of the (Fels) Planetarium mural, especially for the opportunity to paint a true piece of Philadelphia history, at least to anyone who has grown up here,” said Lovett. “I couldn’t have done it without the help and skills of my team.”

**Note the Heart in its current state is of a different material (fiberglass), and the weight is not available.*

Independence Blue Cross (IBX) is the Official Health and Wellness Sponsor of The Giant Heart Exhibition.

Note to Editors: Hi-res images are available on the Press Site: <https://www.fi.edu/press-room/gallery>

The Franklin Institute

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. As Pennsylvania’s most visited museum it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.