

**2001 METROPOLITAN LIFE FOUNDATION AND ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH MUSEUMS  
PROMISING PRACTICE AWARD APPLICANTS  
PROJECT SUMMARIES**

Listed below are summaries of promising practices in U.S. Children's Museums submitted for the 2001 *Metropolitan Life Foundation and Association of Youth Museums Promising Practice Award*. The award honors innovative management and programming practices among U.S. children's museums. The 2001 Promising Practice Award emphasizes practices that define the role of children's museums in creating a dynamic and authentic sense of place for children and families in their communities. *Summaries are taken from applicants' written submissions and are unedited by AYM.*

- 1) **Children's Museum at La Habra**  
**301 S. Euclid Street**  
**La Habra, CA 90631**
- Contact: Melissa Banning, Assistant Director**  
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*Living Memories* creates a sense of place in local history and ownership in their museum for La Habra residents and regional visitors. *Living Memories* gives children an understanding that their family stories are part of the community's history and worthy of exploration at the Museum. Program components include permanent and temporary historical exhibits, multigenerational activities, outreach, bilingual tours, a public reception and collaborative projects with public schools to bring Hispanic children's family histories to life.

- 2) **Lincoln Children's Museum**  
**1420 P Street**  
**Lincoln, NE 68508**
- Contact: Marilyn Gorham, Executive Director**  
**(p) 402/477-0128**  
**(f) 402/477-2004**  
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The Lincoln Children's Museum (LCM) promising practice is turning community donors into creative partnerships that inspire ownership and innovative approaches to funding, exhibit development and long-term maintenance of the Museum. Through this innovative approach the Museum met and exceeded its original capital campaign goal of \$4.4 million to renovate and build a state of the art Museum facility, which opened on October 21, 2000.

- 3) **Santa Fe Children's Museum**  
**1050 Old Pecos Trail**  
**Santa Fe, NM 87501**
- Contact: Ellen Biderman, Co-Director**  
**(p) 505/989-8359**  
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**(e) [ebiderman@santafechildrensmuseum.org](mailto:ebiderman@santafechildrensmuseum.org)**

Although children today express extraordinary awareness of global threats to the environment, their opportunities to explore nature are receding. To address this issue, the Santa Fe Children's Museum has developed a one-acre interactive garden, *Earthworks*. *Earthworks* is a landscape where children and their families can explore a pond and wetlands area, a meadow, many gardens and more. The landscape beckons visitors to interact with others, wonder, play, imagine, reflect and be creative.

- 4) **City Museum**  
**701 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**St. Louis, MO 63103**
- Contact: Gail Cassilly, Executive Director**  
**(p) 314/231-2489**  
**(f) 314/231-1009**  
**(e) [citymsm@swbell.com](mailto:citymsm@swbell.com)**

City Museum engages the visitor to become involved in all the spaces, objects and exhibits, creating the unique experience and environment that is City Museum. The interactive nature of the "art" (which is the museum itself) actually makes the visitor a key element of the work. It is this interaction that welcomes the visitor at their own level of awareness to look at the world in a fresh and broader context. They are surprised by what is art and amazed that art is history and science, thereby strengthening their appreciation for art and their respect for the influence other disciplines have upon art.

5) **The Junior Museum**  
**105 Eighth Street**  
**Troy, NY 12180**

**Contact: Deana Flanders**  
**(p) 518/235-2120**  
**(f) 518/235-6836**  
**(e) dflanders@junior museum.org**

The Junior Museum's *At Risk Youth Program* provides teens from our community with an introduction to the world of employment in a supportive and educational environment. Teens work in various capacities including as educators, animal caretakers and behind-the-scenes assistants. The program focuses on under-served youth, but also includes teens from typically more served populations. This is meant to encourage teamwork, respect for diversity and a sense of community in all of our staff.

6) **The Bay Area Discovery Museum**  
**Fort Baker, 557 McReynolds Road**  
**Sausalito, CA 94965**

**Contact: Maureen Keefe, Director of**  
**Development and Marketing**  
**(p) 415/289-7268**  
**(f) 415/332-9671**  
**(e) mkeefe@badm.org**

The Bay Area Discovery Museum made strategic use of its location in the formation of an educational framework entitled *My Place By The Bay*. The framework is providing the direction for exhibition development, site improvements and an expansion initiative. Using the Museum's physical site as a cornerstone for its vision and applying an education framework as an overarching theme to an expansion project are practices appropriate for consideration by other children's museums.

7) **The Children's Museum (Boston)**  
**300 Congress Street**  
**Boston, MA 02210**

**Contact: Elizabeth Taylor Ghirin,**  
**Grants Manager**  
**(p) 617/426-6500**  
**(f) 617/426-1944**  
**(e) ghirin@bostonkids.org**

*Countdown to Kindergarten* is a year-long citywide campaign to support a smooth transition from home, day care, Head Start or preschool to kindergarten, for families entering the Boston Public School System. A unique collaboration of The Children's Museum, Boston Public Schools, the Mayor's Office and 20 public and private organizations, it provides timely information for parents and school readiness activities for children, culminating in a late August evening of celebration at The Children's Museum.

8) **Minnesota Children's Museum**  
**10 West Seventh Street**  
**St. Paul, MN 55102**

**Contact: Jim Roe, Director of Exhibits**  
**(p) 651/225-6015**  
**(f) 651/225-6006**  
**(e) jroe@mcm.org**

Minnesota Children's Museum's promising practice brings the immersive setting and playful spirit of a children's museum into community libraries across the country. *Go Figure!* includes story-based exhibits created from five math-rich children's books. With the American Library Association, the Museum created a specially designed 700-sf exhibit for libraries. Five copies of the exhibit will travel for two years, bringing a unique blend of hands-on exhibit and library program space to 75 communities in 37 states.

9) **Treehouse Children's Museum**  
**2255 B Ogden City Mall**  
**Ogden, UT 84401**

**Contact: Lynne Goodwin, Executive Director**  
**(p) 801/394-9663**  
**(f) 801/393-6820**  
**(e) treehouse@relia.net**

At Treehouse Children's Museum, creating a sense of place is central to our mission of helping children and families *step into a story*. To achieve our goal, we have worked to create a visual environment that provides a unified and beautiful setting for all our interactive exhibits, and we have worked to create a complimentary programmatic environment that extends and enriches the exhibits through structured programs and informal interactions between children and adult and teen mentors.

10) **Brevard Museum of Art and Science**  
1463 Highland Avenue  
Melbourne, FL 32935

**Contact: Rosemary Endress,**  
**Executive Director**  
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(f) 321/242-0798  
(e) [rosemaryendress@mindspring.com](mailto:rosemaryendress@mindspring.com)

*Young Scientist* and *Studio Clubs*: Weekly after-school programs encouraging children and local families' participation via free quality programming in science or art. *Young Scientist's* projects involve physical sciences. *Studio Club* projects will experiment with a range of materials and techniques in a studio environment, culminating in an exhibition experience. The Museum is in a federally designated urban blight neighborhood. Programs are aimed at youth with little access to after-school programs.

11) **The Children's Museum of Indianapolis**  
P.O. Box 3000  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

**Contact: Kay Cunningham**  
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(f) 317/921-4019  
(e) [kayc@childrensmuseum.org](mailto:kayc@childrensmuseum.org)

On December 13, 2000 The Children's Museum of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library partnered to open the doors to *InfoZone*, a public library branch in a children's museum. The space consists of 3,000 square feet on the museum's main level. Museum visitors have access to *InfoZone* by the museum, while the general public, especially neighbors have free access to *InfoZone* by entering through the north entrance, or *InfoZone* entrance.

12) **Please Touch Museum**  
210 N. 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Contact: Nancy D. Kolb, President & CEO**  
(p) 215/567-5551  
(f) 215/963-0424  
(e) [ceo@pleasetouchmuseum.org](mailto:ceo@pleasetouchmuseum.org)

During supervised visitation at Philadelphia Family Court, Please Touch Museum's *Family Court Visitation Program* provides creative arts and museum-based experiences for non-custodial parents and their children. In a formerly uncomfortable and bleak courtroom waiting area, which PTM transformed into an inviting program and activity center, PTM staff and art therapists engage family members in creative arts activities that reduce stress levels and promote positive parent/child interactions.

13) **Port Discovery,**  
**Baltimore Children's Museum, Inc.**  
Port Discovery, 35 Market Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**Contact: Stephanie McLaughlin**  
(p) 410/727-8120  
(f) 410/727-3042  
(e) [www.portdiscovery.org](http://www.portdiscovery.org)

Port Discovery opened in December 1998 with an overarching theme of encouraging *all* children to pursue their dreams and aspirations. Our after-school enrichment programs are infused with this "dream-achievement" theme and represent one of the museum's most promising practices. These programs utilize our interactive exhibits to teach life-skills, establish mentor relationships, support Maryland's Educational Reform efforts and desired learning outcomes, while truly established a "unique sense of place" for the kids and families of Baltimore.

14) **Lied Discovery Museum**  
833 Las Vegas Blvd. North  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

**Contact: A.J. Rhodes, Director of Education**  
(p) 702/382-3445  
(f) 702/382-0592  
(e) [ajrhodes@ldcm.org](mailto:ajrhodes@ldcm.org)

The annual presentation of *Los Dias de los Muertos* (Days of the Dead) at the Museum over a two-month period creates a "community living room" where families gather to explore a difficult, but universal topic through the lens of a particular culture and belief system. Our decision to undertake this program for its cultural and topical importance to families as well as our comprehensive approach to its presentation, defines our promising practice.

15) **The Discovery Museums**  
177 Main Street  
Acton, MA 01720

**Contact: Deborah J. Gilpin, Executive Director**  
(p) 978/264-4200 (x25)  
(f) 978/2640210  
(e) [discover@ultranet.com](mailto:discover@ultranet.com)

*Explore & Discover* is a museum-school partnership where students, parents and teachers work with artists and community organizations to create a “learning by doing” laboratory throughout the school system. Classrooms, corridors and school yards are transformed with interactive exhibits, mosaics, stained glass window and murals. High school student created exhibits that explore connections between disciplines are rotated through preschool and elementary classrooms and are showcased in a student run children’s museum at the nearby Bernat Mill.

16) **Chicago Children’s Museum**  
700 East Grand Avenue, Suite 127  
Chicago, IL 60611

**Contact: Darchelle M. Garner, Vice President of  
Education and Community Services**  
(p) 312/464-7677  
(f) 312/527-9082  
(e) [darcheleg@chchildrensmuseum.org](mailto:darcheleg@chchildrensmuseum.org)

*Passport to the World*, a new program at Chicago Children’s Museum, provides visitors with opportunities to learn more about the arts, culture and traditions of Chicago’s diverse neighborhoods and enables the Museum to reach large numbers of underserved children and families. *Passport to the World* is a series of six two-month-long celebrations of different cultures: Mexican, Native American, Nigerian, Irish, Indian and Puerto Rican.

17) **The Pittsburgh Children’s Museum**  
10 Children’s Way  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

**Contact: Nicola Sysyn**  
(p) 412/322-5059 (x219)  
(f) 412/322-4932  
(e) [sysyn@pittsburghkids.org](mailto:sysyn@pittsburghkids.org)

The Pittsburgh Children’s Museum has worked to create a unique sense of place for children and families. Through an innovative expansion process, the Museum is creating a unique *Children’s Center* that will bring children together with arts, educational, advocacy and research organizations. This Center will define the Museum as the crossroads of our community. Collaborations among organizations that work with children will create a dynamic synergy that will ultimately benefit our community’s most important resources - its children.

18) **The Children’s Museum of Houston**  
1500 Binz  
Houston, TX 77004

**Contact: Tammie Kahn, Executive Director**  
(p) 713/522-1138 (x211)  
(f) 713/522-5747  
(e) [tkahn@cmhouston.org](mailto:tkahn@cmhouston.org)

*Parent Stars* is a school-based program, performed in collaboration with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) as part of its National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded Urban Systemic Initiative to increase math, science and technology literacy. The program consists of twelve components, designed to help parents learn how to teach math, science and literacy skills to their kindergarten and pre-k children. Within the *Parent Stars* program, parents, children, teachers, school administrators and resource providers come together to create a family friendly place, which, like the Museum, serves to provide wonderful and fun opportunities for learning.

19) **Children’s Museum at Holyoke**  
444 Dwight Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040

**Contact: Amy Landry, Executive Director**  
(p) 413/536-7048  
(f) 413/533-2999  
(e) [landry@javanet.com](mailto:landry@javanet.com)

In a city that ranks at or near the top statewide in most indicators of community distress, the Children’s Museum at Holyoke is challenging Holyoke youth to construct a more positive future through participation in a series of leadership programs that allow youth, from age 8 to 18, to accept increasing levels of responsibility for themselves and their community. Many youth have progressed from level to level, eventually becoming paid staff with a sense of ownership in the museum and community.

- 20) **Connecticut Children's Museum**  
22 Wall Street  
New Haven, CT 06511
- Contact: Sandra Malmquist, Executive Director**  
(p) 203/562-5437  
(f) 203/787-9414  
(e) [creatingkids@snet.net](mailto:creatingkids@snet.net)

The promising practice of the Connecticut Children's Museum is the use of Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences as the inspiration and template for both the design and the designing of the museum. From a series of inspiration evenings, meetings attended by community representatives with interests mirroring each of Gardner's eight intelligences, emerged the innovative and inclusive exhibit templates for the musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily kinesthetic, linguistic and naturalist rooms of the museum. Drawing on the talents of the community and focusing them through the lenses of the multiple intelligences produced a museum rich in resources and rooted in the community—a kaleidoscope of learning opportunities which honors the myriad ways children learn.

- 21) **The Children's Museum of Northern Nevada Inc.**  
813 North Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701
- Contact: Susan Meehan**  
(p) 775/884-2226  
(f) 775/884-2179  
(e) [suzi@cmnn.org](mailto:suzi@cmnn.org)

During our *Summer Camp Youth Mentor Program*, we collaborate with (JOIN) Job Opportunities in Nevada and Carson City's Juvenile Probation Department to train and mentor young people considered "at risk." Over the years, we have mentored 25 people aged 14-17. They assisted staff while learning job skills, social interaction, leadership, responsibility, and caring for younger children in constructive ways. They enjoyed their jobs and appreciated the opportunity to learn from positive role models.

- 22) **Health Works! Kid's Museum**  
111 W. Jefferson, Suite 200  
South Bend, IN 46601
- Contact: Deborah Drendall**  
(p) 219/287-5437  
(f) 219/239-6459  
(e) [ddrendall@memorialsb.org](mailto:ddrendall@memorialsb.org)

Health Works!' promising practice is the *Fully Alive* family program. Content for this parent and child class about sexuality and relationships is determined by class participants. The museum educators utilize Health Works!' style of 'edutainment' involving humor, drama, music and games to facilitate the program. A museum-sponsored teen group is also involved in program delivery. The program has three sessions: 'parent-only,' 'kid only' and 'parent and kid review,' which recaps the material of precious sessions.

- 23) **Capital Children's Museum**  
800 Third Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002
- Contact: Bob O'Keefe, Asst. Director of Development**  
(p) 202/615-4120  
(f) 202/675-4140  
(e) [bokeefe@ccm.org](mailto:bokeefe@ccm.org)

In *Japan: Through the Eyes of a Child*, guests are immersed in the sights and sounds of Japan. In the Tourist Information Center, they become acquainted with the country they are about to "enter" before moving to the Street Scene, a bustling recreation of a Japanese shopping district. While "riding" the *Shinkansen*, children learn about public transportation, geography, economy and culture. Visiting a Home, guests enter a Tatami room to learn about daily life and a kitchen/dining area where they can create traditional crafts. The Classroom/Resource Center offers a variety of guided and self-directed activities.

**24) Young At Art Children's Museum**  
**11584 West State Road 84**  
**Davie, FL 33325**

**Contact: Esther Shrago, Associate  
Director**  
**(p) 954/424-0085 (x20)**  
**(f) 954/370-5057**

To strengthen the learning of elementary school students, Young At Art is collaborating with the School Board of Broward County (the nation's 7<sup>th</sup> largest school district) to establish the first art-and multicultural-based satellite school in a children's museum. Supported by the Annenberg Foundation, the satellite school uses the no-fail, experiential environment of a children's museum as a living laboratory to motivate student learning, provide alternative classroom space and promote a new model for parent and community involvement.

**25) Grand Rapids Children's Museum**  
**22 Shledon Avenue, NE**  
**Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

**Contact: Pamela C. DiMuzio**  
**(p) 616/235-4726 (x202)**  
**(f) 616/235-4728**  
**(e) pdimuzio@grcm.org**

GRCM collaborated with second grade faculty at a Grand Rapids district elementary school, a professor of Early Childhood Education at Calvin College and her students, and medical specialists from Spectrum DeVos Children's Hospital to create a month-long exploration of human anatomy for second graders. The approach integrated art, writing and science, and culminated in a day of public programming at GRCM staffed by doctors and other medical specialists, featuring hands-on activities that let children take on the role of doctor for the day.

**26) Austin Children's Museum**  
**201 Colorado**  
**Austin, TX 78701**

**Contact: Rebecca Jones, Deputy Director**  
**(p) 512/472-2499**  
**(f) 512/472-2495**  
**(e) jonesb@austinkids.org**

The *School/Family Program Model* brings teachers, students and their families together in a coordinated series of programs under the museum's roof, confirming each partner's vital place in the formal and informal learning lives of children in the community. With special emphasis on inviting children and their families who do not normally visit the museum, the model involves an orientation or planning session with teachers, facilitation for student field trips and a subsequent family night at the museum.