

**2002 MetLife Foundation and Association of Children's Museums
Promising Practice Award Applicants
Project Summaries**

Listed below are summaries of promising practices in U.S. Children's Museums submitted for the *2002 MetLife Foundation and Association of Children's Museums Promising Practice Award*. The award honors innovative management and programming practices among U.S. children's museums that illustrate the unique and diverse ways in which children's museums advance some of the common values of the children's museum field: to preserve childhood, to promote lifelong learning through play, and to build community.

1. **Bay Area Discovery Museum** **Contact: Alexandra D. Hamilton, Grants Manager**
557 McReynolds Road **(p) 415/289-7293**
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Community Learning Initiative – The Bay Area Discovery Museum (BADM) engages elementary school children from culturally and economically diverse constituencies in intensive project-based, interdisciplinary arts & sciences learning activities during out-of-school hours. Children work with museum educators, professional artists, and visiting scientists to explore aspects of Bay Area natural, cultural and built environments, and then creatively express their discoveries through collaborative design projects. Program evaluation works to establish a link between these unique experiences and students' academic success.

2. **Betty Brinn Children's Museum** **Contact: Carrie Wettstein,**
929 East Wisconsin Avenue **(p) 414/291-0888**
Milwaukee, WI 53202 **(f) 414/291-0906**
(e) cwett@bbcmkids.org

The Museum collaborated with local child abuse prevention and social service organizations to offer *Family Time*, a program that uses the museum environment to develop the parenting skills of caregivers considered at risk for child abuse/neglect. Based on this successful model, the program was expanded to serve disadvantaged families, as well as teen and single parents. These programs highlight the impact of play on early learning and the value of the museum experience.

3. **Chicago Children's Museum** **Contact: Stacia Whitmore, Director, Foundation and**
700 East Grand Avenue, Suite 127 **Government Grants**
Chicago, IL 60611 **(p) 312/527-7717**
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(e) staciaw@chchildrensmuseums.org

Passport to the World is a collaborative partnership with ethnic communities that provides community members and museum visitors with opportunities to learn more about the arts, culture and traditions of Chicago's diverse neighborhoods and enables Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) to reach large numbers of underserved children and families. *Passport to the World* is a series of six, six-week-long celebrations of different cultures: Mexican, Native American, Nigerian, Irish, South Asian, and Puerto Rican.

4. **Children's Museum at Holyoke** **Contact: Amy Landry, Executive Director**
444 Dwight Street **(p) 413/536-7048**
Holyoke, MA 01040 **(f) 413/533-2999**

In May of 2001, the Children's Museum proudly opened the doors of the new innovative *WGBYKids TV Studio*. The exhibit was the product of months of creative collaboration between the Children's Museum and local public television affiliate WGBY/Channel 57. The project is testament to a much larger collaboration to the ways in which community partnering furthers the goals of an institution while opening up extraordinary pathways for children and adults to learn and play together.

5. **Children's Museum at La Habra**
301 S. Euclid Street
La Habra, CA 90631
- Contact: Kimberly Albarian, Executive Director**
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(f) 562/905-9698
(e) kim_albarian@lahabracity.com

Yearly, the Museum creates thematic programs in collaboration with schools and community agencies to link children, parents and teachers with the Museum. Children participate in hands-on activities at home, school and the Museum that relate to an exhibit created for each program whose goals are tied to state standards in science, language arts, or social studies. Programs are staffed by bilingual specialists to increase participation among non-or limited English –speaking children and families.

6. **Children's Museum of Acadiana, Inc.**
201 E. Congress
Lafayette, LA 70501
- Contact: Brenda G. Petro, M.Ed.,**
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(f) 337/232-8167
(e) cmainfor@bellsouth.net

In January of each school year, most students have attended school for 100 days. A trend in elementary education is to commemorate that day by planning activities that enable students to conceptualize the number 100 in different ways. This correlates with the number and operations standards established by the NCTM. This year, the museum offered programming celebrating the 100th day in school. Each exhibit supported the program by providing hands-on activities that involved counting to 100 by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's.

7. **Children's Museum of LaCrosse**
207 5th Avenue South
LaCrosse, WI 54601
- Contact: Leanne Poellinger,**
Marketing/Development Director
(p) 608/784-2652
(f) 608/784-6988
(e) museumlax@aol.com

On October 19, 2001, 80 girls attended a “Girl Power Camp-In” at the Children’s Museum of La Crosse. They played “diversity bingo,” faced the challenge of the climbing wall, worked as a group to discuss philanthropy and award a donation to a charity, learned about nutrition and enjoyed healthy snacks, learned and practiced yoga, created a decoupage keepsake “Me” box, learned and practiced martial arts, enjoyed free time in the museum and slept among exhibits!

8. **Children's Museum of Utah**
840 North 300 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
- Contact: Darlene Turner, Director of Education**
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(f) 801/328-3384
(e) dturner@childmuseum.org

The Children’s Museum transformed its Little Star Theatre from a simple performance stage into an interactive space designed to empower children to self produce, direct, and act out one of two popular stories: *Where The Wild Things Are* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. This was done by creating two prefabricated, child friendly, interchangeable backdrops; a child-friendly soundboard with voice directed production instructions, story narrations and sound effects; costumes, props and stage furniture.

9. **Creative Discovery Museum**
P.O. Box 6339
Chattanooga, TN 37401
- Contact: Henry H. Schulson, Executive Director**
(p) 423/756-2738 (x265)
(f) 423/267-9344
(e) hhs@cdmfun.org

Kids Like You – Kids Like Me is a disabilities awareness program that celebrates the abilities of all people in a hands-on and fun-filled atmosphere. Major components include teacher training, an exhibit featuring a wheelchair obstacle course, school tours, and weekend activities that showcase community organization and their services for people with disabilities. It has fostered the development of other programs including an after-school program for visually impaired children and a camp for children with autism.

10. **Curious Kids' Museum**
415 Lake Boulevard
St. Joseph, MI 49085
- Contact: Patricia Adams, Executive Director**
(p) 616/983-2543
(f) 616/983-3317
(e) ckm@curiouskidsmuseum.org

To ensure this Museum is meeting our “guests” wants, youth participate in designing/developing exhibits, programs, media/ads and long range planning: a) Students designed 12 concepts for “Curious Kids in Outer Space” exhibit; b) Students designed “Real World Science Behind Pokemon” programming; c) Middle schoolers developed Museum newspaper and billboard ads for their age group; d) 25 youths developed goals for long range plans— 150 kids in focus groups enthusiastically decided our five-year future.

11. **Exploration Place**
300 N. McLean Boulevard
Wichita, KS 67202
- Contact: Judy Conners, Director of Development**
(p) 316/266-4271
(f) 316/263-4545
(e) jconners@exploration.org

Kids Explore Outdoors, a two-acre outdoor-education component of Exploration Park, consists of play and learning environments that help the organization fulfill its core commitment to be a community gathering place providing free, outdoor, multidisciplinary activities for families and groups with children from toddlers through age twelve. During spring and summer, staff act as “play coaches” and organize free programs and events that give urban residents and under-served audiences access to high quality experiences.

12. **Hands On Children's Museum**
106 11th Avenue, SW
Olympia, WA 98501
- Contact: Patty Belmonte, Executive Director**
(p) 360/956-0818
(f) 360/754-8626
(e) prpatty@attbi.com

Hand In Hand is a community-wide public education campaign that promotes the value of early learning and early literacy while building skills for parents, childcare providers, and other caregivers. Using the Early Learning Discovery Center at the Hands On Children’s Museum as a gathering place and resource center, the campaign links a network of community partners including hospitals, pediatricians, colleges, and social service agencies to deliver programs and disseminate information.

13. **Kohl Children's Museum**
165 Green Bay Road
Wilmette, IL 60091-3303

Contact: Craig Dresang, Vice President,
External Affairs
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(f) 847/853-9154
(e) cdresang@kohlchildrensmuseum.org

Kohl Children's Museum's (KCM) *Early Childhood Connections* (ECC) serves low-income classrooms representing every zip code in Chicago. ECC's primary purpose is to increase teachers' knowledge of project-based learning and put project-based learning into existing curriculum. KCM works directly with public schools to determine classroom needs. Departing from standard practices of single visit/single field trip programs, ECC creates stronger, more lasting ties to schools by offering yearlong programming and mini-residencies for educators.

14. **Mid-Hudson Children's Museum**
South Hills Mall, 1095 South Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Contact: Diane Pedevillano, Executive Director
(p) 845/297-5938
(f) 845/297-5938
(e) mhcm@vh.net

The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum's promising practice is the way that we enhance our interactive exhibit themes with innovative programs led by trained educators, staff, and community volunteers, and to create a hands-on learning environment where the incredible potential of each child can flourish. Our educational programs strive to encourage shared discovery among children and adults, and are designed to involve our entire community from infant/toddler playgroups, to teen after school programs, to senior citizen volunteers.

15. **Muncie Children's Museum**
515 S. High Street
Muncie, IN 47305

Contact: Lenette Freeman, Executive Director
(p) 765/286-1660
(f) 765-286-1662
(e) lenettefr@aol.com

The Muncie Children's Museum's Youth Academy for Community Leadership provides youth, ages 13-18 with a skill-building program to enhance leadership skills, participate in service learning events and volunteer in their community. Over four months, twenty youth, representing 12 different schools gather at the Museum for interactive learning on such topics as community, team building, personal mission, career exploration, self-esteem, conflict resolution, leadership, and public speaking. Youth also investigate local and state initiatives involving young people.

16. **Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo**
1451 Middlefield Road
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Contact: Jennifer Rothman,
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(f) 650/473-1965
(e) jennifer_rothman@city.palo-alto.ca.us

The East Palo Alto Outreach Program provides hands-on science programming at no charge to schools in the Ravenswood School District. The program is unique because our educators visit every classroom, in two pilot schools, once a week for 25 weeks. Each lesson plan is specifically designed for the needs of the school, teachers, and students. We have purchased much needed supplies for schools, offered resources to teachers, and provided engaging experiences for the students.

17. **Please Touch Museum®**
210 North 21st Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Contact: Elaine Wideman-Vaughn,
(p) 215/963-0667
(f) 215/963-0424
(e) evaughn@pleasetouchmuseum.org

ACES (Achievement through Community Service, Education, and Skill Building) is Please Touch Museum's work-based learning, enrichment and mentoring program that currently serves 25 at-risk, low income teenagers from four of Philadelphia's public high schools. ACES, a three-year program of comprehensive services, helps students successfully transition to higher education and meaningful employment. Students, who enter ACES as sophomores and graduate as seniors, spend one day per week working with staff mentors from throughout the museum.

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

Contact: Shannon Aronin, Foundations Relations
(p) 410/864-2670
(f) 410/727-3042
(e) saronin@portdiscovery.org

The Transition Academy, an innovative partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools, uses Port Discovery as host of an on-site school for sixty academically at-risk ninth-graders. Among the three pilot academies throughout the city, Port Discovery's site produced the most successful quantifiable results. The school system acknowledged these results, and founded six additional academies modeled after the Port Discovery site. In coming years, Baltimore City intends to replicate this teaching model within its school system.

19. **Providence Children's Museum**
100 South Street
Providence, RI 02903

Contact: Janice O'Donnell, Executive Director
(p) 401/273-5437
(f) 401/273-1004
(e) odonnell@childrenmuseum.org

Providence Children's Museum's (PCM) Learning Together program is a partnership with an urban elementary school serving ethnically diverse low-income children and a rural elementary school with a homogenous student population, most from moderate-income households. This partnership, developed at the request of the teachers, brings together students and teachers from diverse backgrounds, promotes children's belief that they are learners and that learning is fun, and provides teachers and parents with tools to support their children's learning in the classroom and at home.

20. **Santa Fe Children's Museum**
1050 Old Pecos Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Contact: Ellen Biderman, Executive Director
(p) 505/989-8359 (x103)
(f) 505/989-7506
(e) ebiderman@santafechildrensmuseum.org

On The Trail, a program of the Santa Fe Children's Museum, is a museum-quality summer day camp that offers children ages seven through 11 the opportunity to explore, play, learn, and discover in a wilderness setting. At camp children safely develop powerful relationships with the natural world through playful explorations. On The Trail is a unique museum experience that is reminiscent of a time when playing outdoors was how all children spent the summer months.

21. **Staten Island Children's Museum**
1000 Richmond Terrace
Staten Island, NY 10301
- Contact: Dina Rosenthal, Executive Director**
(p) 718/273-2060 (x145)
(e) drosenthal@sichildrensmuseum.org

The Staten Island Children's Museum's approach to exhibit development enlists participation from segments of staff and audience that exceeds most institutions' use of these valuable resources. The methodology employed by the museum to conduct front-end evaluation recognizes that the voices of young children can inspire greater creativity. In addition, by broadening the composition of the exhibit team to include staff responsible for institutional advancement, the goals of the museum and its audience both inform the process.

22. **The Children's Museum of Denver**
2121 Children's Museum Drive
Denver, CO 80211
- Contact: Linda E. Farley, Ph.D., Executive Director**
(p) 303/561-0119
(f) 303/433-9520
(e) lindaf@cmdenver.org

The Children's Museum of Denver's promising practice is its Diversity Initiative. Launched in the fall of 2000, The Initiative is now in its second year fulfilling a set of goals and objectives that articulate specific actions The Museum will take to better serve and establish partnerships with socio-economic, cultural/ethnic, and language diverse families, schools, and other care providers. It also delineates The Museum's commitment to exposing non-diverse guests to cultural and language diversity.

23. **The Children's Museum of Northern Nevada, Inc.**
813 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
- Contact: Denise Sins, Executive Director**
(p) 775/884-2225
(f) 775/884-2179
(e) denise@cmnn.org

The promising practice of The Children's Museum is to create a permanent fairy land exhibit that will be populated by elves and fairies whose faces depict local school children. These murals will be created by photographing the kids and painting their likenesses on the faces of enchanted forest inhabitants. The children will receive a video and professional photo while their faces will be on display as a part of the museum in perpetuity.

24. **The Children's Museum of Portsmouth**
280 Marcy Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801
- Contact: Susan Kaufman, Director of Exhibits**
(p) 603/436-3853
(f) 603/436-7706
(e) suek@childrens-museum.org

The urge to collect is universal, yet each collection is as unique as its collector. Our goal was to share and encourage, community-wide, the curiosity, enthusiasm, learning, and personal engagement that collecting generates. Forty-six simple collections, accompanied by narratives, were gathered from community members for display: small collections within the museum, larger ones in store windows. Visitors followed a collections quest map from the museum through downtown where participating businesses were identified by colorful banners.

25. **The Children's Museum, Seattle**
305 Harrison Street
Seattle, WA 98109
- Contact: Kristen F. Ragain,**
(p) 206/441-1769
(f) 206/448-0910
(e) kragain@thechildrensmuseum.org

Inside-Out is a free, year-round, after-school arts and humanities program for at-risk youth (ages 5-14) living at the New Holly and Rainier Vista public housing communities. *Inside-Out* gives low-income children a safe, neighborhood-based place to create art, while gaining social skills and developing the increased self-discipline and confidence to succeed academically. Our multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary arts curriculum is developed to inspire and excite our young artists, many of which are immigrants and first generation Americans.

26. **The Junior Museum**
105 8th Street
Troy, NY 12180
- Contact: Deana R. Flanders, Youth Advisor**
(p) 518/235-2120 (x216)
(f) 518/235-6836
(e) dflanders@junior museum.org

The Junior Museum's YouthODYSSEY program encourages teens from diverse backgrounds to meet as a community to learn job skills and share their unique experiences. Annually they invite teens from another youth program to visit and exchange ideas and experiences. YouthODYSSEY teens showcase their museum, creating a sense of pride and ownership. Additionally, the teens get to know one another, learn about their work from another perspective, and form connections with friends.

27. **Treehouse Children's Museum**
455 23rd Street, P.O. Box 727
Ogden, UT 84402
- Contact: Lynne Goodwin, Executive Director**
(p) 801/394-9663
(f) 801/393-6820
(e) treehouse@relia.net

A unique Family Literacy Initiative at Treehouse Children's Museum blends common values with folk and fairy tales from around the globe to address literacy issues by providing opportunities to practice literacy skills, bond together as a family around the act of reading and learning together, and to equip parents to be their child's most important teacher. The stories we share through interactive exhibits and programs, though often presenting cultures and vocabulary new to our visitors, also illustrate universal values to which our visitors can easily relate, giving parents and children a common starting point for sharing stories and conversations with each other. The goal of the initiative is tied to the Museum's mission of being the place where children and adults step into a story.

28. **Wilmington Children's Museum**
1020 Market Street
Wilmington, NC 28401
- Contact: Mebane Boyd, Executive Director**
(p) 910/254-3534
(f) 910/254-3565
(e) twcm@coastalnet.com

For three (3) years the Wilmington Children's Museum has organized a fund-raising event called Castles & Scoops. We work to ensure that all facets of our organization, including fund-raising, include as many segments of our community as possible. Our sand-castle building contest has five categories: families, businesses, non-profit children's organizations, adult groups and professionals. Entry costs vary by category, and for children's groups is often free through sponsorships. Spectators are free and the event is nominated to be one of the top twenty events in North Carolina.

29. **The Children's Museum in New Braunfels**
386 W. San Antonio Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
- Contact: Julie Swift, Executive Director**
(p) 830/620-0939
(f) 830/626-0440
(e) jbswift@nbchildren.org

The Children's Museum in New Braunfels serves the New Braunfels High School teen parent class, Very Important Parents, in monthly one-hour sessions at the Museum. The 26-40 student class spends one class period per month participating in activities and projects that promote parenting skills, appropriate childhood play, and provide parenting tools. VIPs plan and complete a project that contributes to the museum learning environment. The students are awarded a family plus membership.