

## 2005 METLIFE FOUNDATION AND ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS PROMISING PRACTICE AWARD SUMMARIES



The 2005 Promising Practice Award recognizes innovative children's museums projects that support diversity and inclusion. Following are summaries from all children's museums that applied for the award.

### **ArtREACH** (2005 Award Recipient)

Young At Art Children's Museum  
Davie, FL

Mindy Shrago  
954-424-0085 x.21

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Homeless children, isolated in shelters, endure extreme feelings of shame and loneliness. Young At Art — working with its local school district and Salvation Army — reaches out to homeless children through a program called ArtREACH. Inside the largest family shelter in its region, apartments have been transformed into vibrant after-school centers that provide art and computer activities, homework assistance, behavioral therapy, parent/child programs and field trips. In a nurturing environment, ArtREACH embraces the spirit and vitality of a children's museum.

### **Institutional Diversity Plan** (2005 Award Recipient)

Chicago Children's Museum  
Chicago, IL

Stacia Whitmore  
312-464-7717

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In 2002, the Chicago Children's Museum staff and board initiated a three-year *Institutional Diversity Plan* to improve its diversity performance in all areas of its operations: exhibits, programming, community connections, marketing, human capital and research. Embedded in Chicago's plan, the museum has set challenging, yet realistic goals and measurable objectives for the promotion of diversity in all areas.

### **Special Needs Volunteerism** (2005 Award Recipient)

Virginia Discovery Museum  
Charlottesville, VA

Amanda Petrusich  
434-977-1025

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The Virginia Discovery Museum actively encourages the recruitment and retention of special needs volunteers — men and women who are, for a variety of reasons, not typically thought of as assets to the museum community (including people with mental and physical disabilities, such as head trauma, emphysema, psychiatric diagnoses, mobility impairments, and other challenges). The result is an extraordinarily diverse group of volunteers that range dramatically in age, background, education level, and life experiences.

### **Fathers and Families** (2005 Honorable Mention)

Betty Brinn Children's Museum  
Milwaukee, WI

Fern Shupeck  
414-390-5437

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Many children's museums have implemented programs designed to make their facility accessible to disadvantaged families. Unfortunately, even the most successful museums find it difficult to engage fathers. To address this challenge, the museum collaborated with a community organization dedicated to promoting and strengthening fatherhood among at-risk men. The Betty Brinn Children's Museum *Fathers and Families* program provides parenting instruction, transportation assistance and free membership, enabling some of community's most vulnerable families to benefit from the museum experience.

**Project ACCELERATE** (2005 Honorable Mention)

The Children's Museum of Houston  
Houston, TX

Tammie Kahn  
713-522-1138 x.211

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*Project ACCELERATE* is an outreach program of The Children's Museum of Houston performed in collaboration with sixteen community centers and elementary schools to improve the quality of after-school programming for low-income, elementary school-age youth. Bilingual (English/Spanish) mentors use twenty-six sets of open-ended, hands-on and computer-based activities to engage children in inquiry-based learning.

**Unified Community Initiative** (2005 Honorable Mention)

Brooklyn Children's Museum  
Brooklyn, NY

Carol Enseki  
718-735-4400 x.135

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A major goal of the Brooklyn Children's Museum's *Unified Community Initiative* is to build greater cultural understanding among children from diverse backgrounds. Through the process of developing and evaluating a series of five cultural exhibits, the museum created a Framework for Cultural Inquiry. The framework guides the development of new cultural exhibits and programs for children, ages 4-11. The framework informs how to teach and encourage children to use cultural inquiry skills, so that they may learn about their own and other cultures.

**Early Childhood Connections**

Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago  
Wilmette, IL

Sheridan Turner  
847-512-1300

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Created for young children at risk of academic failure in low-income communities, Kohl Children's Museum's *Early Childhood Connections* enhances classroom studies with learning experiences designed for the museum, the school and the home. The program provides professional development for teachers and involves parents in extending learning in the home.

**Kids 'N' Stuff**

Kids 'N' Stuff! An Interactive Experience for Kids  
Albion, MI

Elizabeth Schultheiss  
517-629-8023

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*Kids 'N' Stuff (KNS)* assures that all children are given the opportunity to learn through play, no exceptions, no excuses. To this end *KNS* has engaged in a two year planning process that has resulted in the expansion of *KNS*, scheduled to open August 31, 2005. Utilizing the theme *Around the World in 80 Days* the museum is creating an environment that is sensitive to cultures from around the world, as well as to individuals of all abilities.

**The Way West**

Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center/ Buell Children's Museum  
Pueblo, CO

Desi Vial  
719-295-7217

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In collaboration with its local school district, curators at the Buell Children's Museum created an educational program called *The Way West*, in which third and fourth grade students visit the museum to learn about the history, culture and society of the American West through the arts. Museum activities use Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to meet Colorado State Education Content Standards. The program also includes educator training in classroom activities and lesson planning.

**UPCLOSE**

COSI Toledo  
Toledo, OH

William Booth  
419-244-2674 x101

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UPCLOSE is a youth development program for at-risk, middle school age girls. UPCLOSE introduces science-related topics in a non-threatening, gender-neutral environment. The program inspires young women to increase their interest and ability in science and technology, enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem, increase awareness of science-related careers and develop workplace skills.

**Hands On English**

The Children's Museum at La Habra  
La Habra, CA

Kimberly Powell Albarian  
562-905-9634

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In a region where 30 percent of children enter kindergarten without knowing English, The Children's Museum at La Habra works in partnership with Southern California schools to promote learning English. *Hands On English* offers museum-based literacy activities for kindergarten and first grade English Language Learners at risk of school failure, provides public school teachers with curriculum materials, models successful methods for teaching English and provides students with literacy activities to do at home with their parents.

**Violence Prevention Workshops**

Staten Island Children's Museum  
Staten Island, NY

Dina Rosenthal  
718-273-2060

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Staten Island Children's museum interns developed a *Violence Prevention Workshops* for low-to-moderate-income children (in grades three to five) who are enrolled in an inner-city after-school program. Drama, creative writing and art figure prominently in aiding the children to express anger, frustration and developing creative responses to the aggression confronting them. Without a tremendous disparity in age, and a host of similar experiences to relate to, the museum's trained interns (who are teenagers) are effective mentors and role models for the next generation.

**Science and Literacy Collaborative**

The Children's Museum of Denver  
Denver, CO

Mike Yankovich  
303-433-7444

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The Children's Museum of Denver partners with 24, second grade classrooms from 12 schools to provide integrative science and literacy experiences that include school, museum and home-based activities. The *Science and Literacy Collaborative* provides children who meet the federal poverty guidelines with experiences in informal settings that extend and deepen their classroom work. By integrating the learning environments — school, museum and home — children begin to understand that learning occurs in many places.

**STEM Robotics Program**

Boonshoft Museum of Discovery  
Dayton, OH

Susan Pion  
937-275-7431 x148

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Using robotics as a connector, the museum links science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning opportunities for ages three through adult. Year-round programming focuses on diverse audiences, including the underserved, and the retention of those audience from program to program for maximum learning. Experiences include a pre-kindergarten program, an after-school program, robotics competitions and a summer program. Community involvement and program evaluation enable the museum to meet specific needs of the population.

### **Global Spotlight**

Exploris  
Raleigh, NC

Jennifer Stancil  
919-857-1038 or 919-834-4040

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The Exploris *Global Spotlight* turns its lens to a specific global community, inviting school groups, families, and adults to learn about a region's uniqueness and how they are connected to it. Born out of a desire to be the community's "front porch," drive visitation, work in partnership with community agencies and engage visitors by giving voice, visuals and vitality to a specific region or topic, the *Global Spotlight* initiative continues to be a promising practice for Exploris.

### **U.S.-Russia Pen Pals**

Worldways Children's Museum  
Ballwin, MO

Jeanne Fischer  
636-207-7405

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Communicating through the Internet, Worldways teamed up with children in schools and children's museums throughout Russia to design an exhibition with an experiential approach to introduce Russian culture to its local children's museum audience. In contrast to traditional cultural or historical presentations, the *U.S.-Russia Pen Pals* exhibit features youthful perspectives and content based on common childhood experiences. The project received support from the State Department, American Association of Museums and community organizations.

### **CityArts Mentoring Program**

Amazement Square, The Rightmire Children's Museum  
Lynchburg, VA

Mort Sajadian  
434-845-1888

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Through mentor relationships, cross-cultural interaction and the creation of outdoor public art, Amazement Square's *CityArts Mentoring Program* aims to build a community in which children and families are reconnected with one another, sustained by creative and meaningful work and nurtured by the creative process. Having already produced two outdoor public artworks, *CityArts*, is setting out to transform a 4,800 square foot concrete wall into the first monumental-scale, mosaic mural in downtown Lynchburg.

### **Afterschool Achievement Program**

Amazement Square Discovery Center Museum  
Rockford, IL

Sarah Wolf  
815-963-6769

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The *Afterschool Achievement Program* teaches important life skills, positive cultural experiences and lessons in health, math, science and the arts for at-risk students. Operated in partnership among the museum, the local school district and cultural organizations, the program serves 1,100 at-risk children weekly.

### **Summer Science Program**

Flint Children's Museum  
Flint, MI

Jaclyn Metcalfe  
810-767-5437

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The poverty in Flint's population is 26 percent higher than the average among 21 other major cities in the United States. In response, the Flint Children's Museum hosts a free *Summer Science Program* for 1,500 inner city children. The museum provides the children presentations on nutrition and digestion and programs related to the museum's science and engineering exhibits as well as other permanent museum exhibits.

**Science For All**

Science Center of Connecticut  
West Hartford, CT

Hank Gruner  
860-231-2830 ext. 28

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*Science For All* provides educational programs in math, science, the environment and technology to students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit the Science Center. There are 14 Connecticut Priority School Districts, which are recognized by the Connecticut Department of Education as having academic need. The ten year-old *Science For All Program* extends the reach of science learning programs to youth who are under-served and under-represented in the sciences.

**Etiquette Essentials for Young Children**

Greensboro Children's Museum  
Greensboro, NC

Gabrielle Howell  
336-510-1094

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The Greensboro Children's Museum's (GCM) promising practice goes beyond *please* and *thank you* with an etiquette essentials class that introduces and reinforces proper manners, behavior and poise for under-privileged preschoolers. *Etiquette Essentials for the Young Child* is designed to increase self-esteem and social skills through role-play, instruction and tutorial dining. GCM collaborates with an etiquette expert, local restaurants, area businesses, childcare centers and childcare agencies to promote self-esteem and self-assurance in any social setting.

**Outreach and Scholarship Program**

Children's Museum of Montana  
Great Falls, MT

Darlene Bos  
406-452-6661

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Children's Museum of Montana's *Outreach and Scholarship Program* enables and encourages low income and at-risk families the opportunity to participate in the educational hands-on activities provided by the museum. The museum makes free admissions and expanded fieldtrip packages available to organizations and schools working with underserved families. Additionally, the museum provides educational activities that complement the State of Montana's curriculum goals in the elementary school and are developed to be age-appropriate.

**Club Discovery**

Creative Discovery Museum  
Chattanooga, TN

Sharman Sherfey  
423-648-6043

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*Club Discovery* is a weekly after-school program for children with disabilities and their typically developing peers. The program, for children ages 9 to 12, provides quality educational opportunities and helps prepare club members to enter the Museum Apprentice Program, a teen volunteer program. Children are welcomed into an inclusive environment where they participate in activities that foster team building, self-confidence, independence, communication skills and physical agility. Approximately 30 children participate in the program each year.

**Institutional Diversity Plan**

The Discovery Center of the Southern Tier  
Binghamton, NY

Margaret Crocker  
607-773-8661

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The Discovery Center of the Southern Tier is located in a culturally rich community comprised of 84 ethnic groups. Second only to New York City, Binghamton is the largest melting pot of cultural diversity in New York. It is the promising practice of our museum to instill tolerance, ethnic pride and respectfulness through the development of exhibitions and programming with children's literature as its thematic cornerstone.

**Cultural Events Series**

Tucson Children's Museum  
Tucson, AZ

Sandy Napombejra  
520-792-9985

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The Tucson Children's Museum began collaborating with community groups and individuals in 2001 to develop multicultural programming at the museum. The collaborative effort has grown into a four-month long series of events, exhibits, and activities including the Children's Social Powwow, held with the Tucson Indian Center; *Dia de los Muertos*, held with *el Museo de Culturas Populares e Indigenas*; and the Festival of Lights, presented by various cultural organizations to share their unique holiday traditions.

**Institutional Diversity Plan**

Children's Museum of Durango  
Durango, CO

Martha McClellan  
970-259-9234

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The promising practice of the Children's Museum of Durango is to be the string that carefully sews together the patchwork that is our unique tri-culture community. These connections bring together all the families in the area in a way that celebrates and appreciates diversity. The museum reaches out to be available to all kids, with no exceptions. The museum reduces language, cultural and social barriers through its programs, workshops and exhibits. It also supports a safe, non-threatening environment for children of all ages and abilities to succeed. Most of all, the museum takes the patchwork and embroiders it with identity.

**Outreach Initiative**

Discovery Center at Murfree Spring  
Murfreesboro, TN

Rachel Anderson  
615-890-2300

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Collaboration, diversity, outreach, accessibility and education are key objectives of Discovery Center's *Outreach Initiative*. The comprehensive initiative involves local business, community organizations, ethnically diverse individuals and a committed staff and Board in the creation and support of changing cultural exhibits and programs. In addition, the museum increases accessibility by providing free access and by providing an environment within the museum that is welcoming and responsive to all children and families.

**Across the Board Latino Initiative**

Children's Museum of Manhattan  
New York, NY

Andrew Ackerman  
212-721-1223

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The *Across the Board Latino Initiative* is a comprehensive, long-term commitment by the Board and staff to diversity. Partnerships with the Hispanic Federation, local community-based organizations and government agencies have changed the museum's strategic plan, exhibition and program schedule, development and marketing/PR efforts and staff/Board composition. As a result of the commitment to diversity the museum will limit expansion of its current site in favor of satellites in Latino communities.

**Neighborhoods at Play**

Grand Rapids Children's Museum  
Grand Rapids, MI

Andrea Essling  
616-235-4726 x201

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*Neighborhoods at Play (NAP)* celebrates neighborhoods and children within those neighborhoods by bringing children together to paint banners for public display. A collaboration of Grand Rapids Children's Museum, The Rapid (busing), Neighborhood Business Specialists Program, Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation and artists Reb Roberts and Carmella Loftis, *NAP* demonstrates the creative potential of children from all walks of life, demonstrating to neighbors and the community that children are capable of creating valuable works of art.

### **Early Discoveries Club**

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis  
Indianapolis, IN

Jenny Burch  
317-334-4608

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The *Early Discoveries Club (EDC)* is a free program for expectant parents and new parents with children ages birth to 24 months. Designed to nurture a love of learning in the youngest members of its community, the *EDC* provides first time parents and their newborns enriching museum experiences and connections to parenting resources. The *EDC* seeks to create a lifelong relationship with its members, beginning with regular museum visits at an early age.

### **Home Holiday Traditions**

Children's Discovery Museum  
Victoria, TX

Cathy Lowe  
361-485-9140

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*Home Holiday Traditions* is an annual exhibit developed three years ago for the purpose of giving community members an opportunity to share their cultures and through the process, create a stronger community. Visitors have experienced the traditions of *Hanukkah*, *Diwali*, *Nutcracker Ballet*, *Posada*, *Kwanza*, *Eid ul-Fitr* and *Christmas*. In addition to static displays, the museum hosts field trip presentations, instrumental and dance performances, story telling, ethnic foods, games, and folk crafts.

### **Creating Readers**

Connecticut Children's Museum  
New Haven, CT

Sandra Malmquist  
203-562-5437

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*Creating Readers* is a diverse and inclusive literacy initiative at the Connecticut Children's Museum that recognizes that all children need strong literacy learning skills to succeed in school and in life. To create readers, the museum (1) integrates children's picture books into museum exhibits, creating a tapestry of literature to support children's diverse learning styles, (2) helps children acquire vibrant language by reading aloud to them in English and Spanish and using American Sign Language, (3) infuses family visits and educational field trips with interactive and enriched, arts-based literacy experiences and (4) provides each visiting child with a book in English, Spanish or Braille.

### **Pledge School Program**

The Children's Peace Pavilion  
Independence, MD

Kelly Ellison  
816-521-3033

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In an effort to respond to the increased violence in our schools and communities, The Children's Peace Pavilion launched the *Pledge School Program* in 1999. The program integrates the four concepts of peace that originated from the museum, as classroom-based activities. The concepts — Peace for Me, Peace for Us, Peace for Everyone and Peace for the Planet — provide schools with an innovative, holistic, comprehensive approach to peace education. Curriculum materials aligned to the state standards. Additionally, the museum provides resources for teachers to introduce students with everyday peacemaking skills.

### **Anacostia Initiative**

Discovery Creek Children's Museum of Washington  
Washington, DC

Kathryn Palmer  
202-337-5111

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Discovery Creek's *Anacostia Initiative* in partnership with Kenilworth Elementary School serves all of the school's third through sixth grade students and teachers. The museum engages children daily in hands-on environmental science programs free of charge at the museum's nearby site at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, situated on the Anacostia River in Northeast Washington, D.C. The innovative curriculum developed aligns with National Science Content Standards.

**Global Village**

Fox Cities Children's Museum  
Appleton, WI

Patti Habeck  
920-734-3226

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*GLOBAL VILLAGE: A Cultural Diversity Artist Series* Fox Cities Children's Museum's response to an Appleton study that cites diversity as a "critical issue." Designed to promote diversity education, *GLOBAL VILLAGE* uses an approach that children recognize — namely, art — to teach a more abstract and difficult theme: diversity. This approach is based on the idea that children incorporate new ideas more firmly when they are presented in an interdisciplinary, experimental and investigative manner.

**Club EdVenture**

EdVenture Children's Museum  
Columbia, SC

Catherine Horne  
803-400-1140

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On weekdays at 2:45 p.m., two yellow school buses arrive at EdVenture's group entrance. These buses have the unique mission of delivering 89 elementary students to *Club EdVenture*, an after school program developed in partnership between EdVenture and Richland District One. At *Club EdVenture*, children have the opportunity to expand their educational journey. The joy of learning inspires their creativity, which in turn will help them enjoy educational success regardless of their families socio-economic status.

**I Can Be!**

Children's Museum of the Lowcountry  
Charleston, SC

Megan Molony  
843-853-8962

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The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry offers an ongoing, eight-week after-school program, *I CAN BE!*, for low-income youth in its immediate neighborhood. Through hands-on exploration, children learn about themselves and what they can be. The program, which includes exhibits, activities, journal writing and portrait collage, opens children's eyes to the wider world around them and the unique world inside themselves.

**Institutional Diversity Plan**

The Children's Museum of Northern Nevada, Inc.  
Carson City, NV

Kenneth Beaton  
775-884-2226

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Throughout the calendar year, The Children's Museum of Northern Nevada, Inc., hosts hands-on learning adventures that feature various cultures and often provides free admission to low-income families on selected days.

**Community Access Network**

DuPage Children's Museum  
Naperville, IL

Susan Broad  
630-637-8000 x.2000

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The DuPage Children's Museum (DCM) inspires a new model of truly collaborative, individualized partnerships through its *Community Access Network*. Going far beyond the traditional free access to undeserved families (which the museum does provide), DCM works with more than 70 social service agencies to create tailored services based on their expressed needs — from Third Thursday programming for children's with autism to traveling exhibits for family shelters.

**Museum for All**

Lincoln Children's Museum  
Lincoln, NE

Cindy Ryman Yost  
402-477-0128

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For the past two years, the museum has utilized staff training, community advisors and collaborative relationships to expand the museum audience and enrich programming. Programs designed for immigrants and refugees, senior citizens, deaf children, children with cancer and families enrolled in Head Start have resulted in the Lincoln Children's Museum truly becoming *A Museum for All*.

**Youth Rangers**

Children's Museum of Maine  
Portland, ME

Sheryl Kingery Mays  
207-828-1234 x.228

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The Children's Museum of Maine (CMM) developed Youth Rangers, a youth employment program, to change the face of the museum's staff. Like many other museums, the CMM staff is almost entirely female and Caucasian. When staff positions became available, the applicant pool rarely reflected the gender and racial diversity CMM was seeking. Creating a youth employment program allows CMM to work collaboratively with local youth organizations and schools to target specific teen applicants to increase employee diversity.