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Minnesota Children's Museum Report

February 26, 2010



Minnesota Children's Museum Background

Strong State-wide attendance

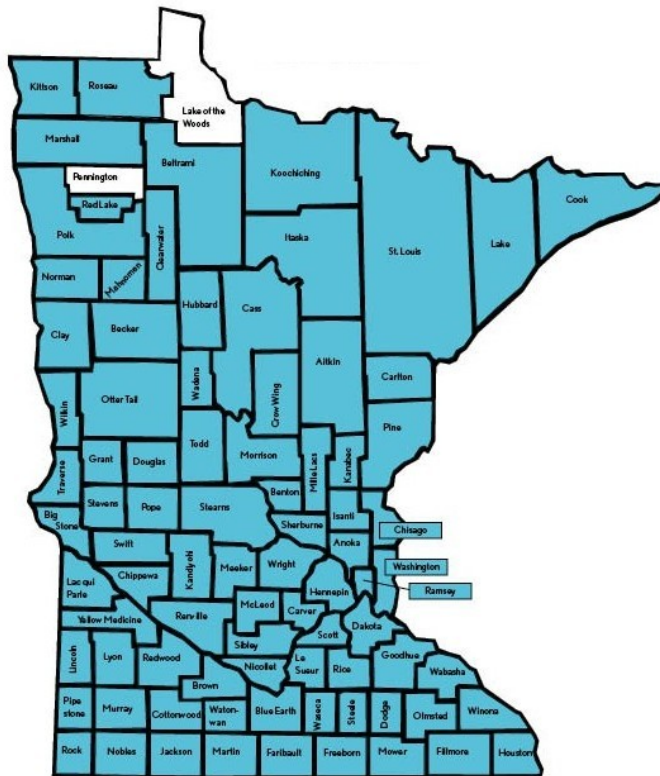
- 403,000 attendance in 2009
 - 18% (72,500) of visitors from Greater Minnesota
 - 10% (40,300) of visitors are tourists from outside Minnesota

Strong community partnerships

- 30% attend at free or reduced admission
- 50 community based partners

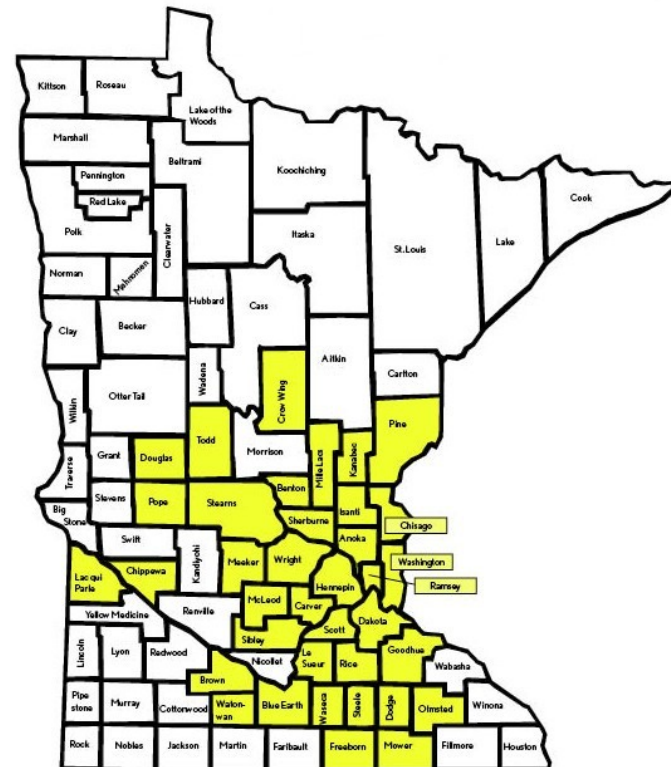
State-wide resource

Visitors



85 of 87 counties send visitors

School Groups



37 of 87 counties send school groups

Minnesota Children's Museum Background

Mission: *Sparking children's learning through play*

- We believe learning must be nurtured from birth
- Playing and learning in early developmental years are intimately connected

Audience

- Children ages birth-10
- Parents and care givers
- School groups
- Educators & child care providers

Public Value of Museum

- Museum visits support early learning & kindergarten readiness
- Museum visits support love of arts & culture

Minnesota Children's Museum Background

Seven galleries

<i>Earth World:</i>	Environmental education
<i>Work Works:</i>	Science and math learning
<i>Our World:</i>	Culture & community
<i>Rooftop ArtPark:</i>	Creative arts
<i>Habitot:</i>	Learning & development for children birth-three
<i>Changing galleries:</i>	Traveling exhibits focus on culture, books and other topics

Programs

Story time, creative arts and gross motor activities offered daily by highly skilled staff

School Services

- 65,000 schools and groups
- Professional Development
- Offsite classes and learning trunks

Clean Water, Land and Legacy Funding Report

Summary of Request

Legacy funding will be applied to all aspects of *Building Early Literacy Together*: the exhibit outputs of *Bound to Read* and *Minnesota Reads*, the strategic community partnerships, and the larger engagement of communities across the state in early education and development. *Minnesota Reads* will tour three to six community sites throughout Minnesota over a two year period. While in each Greater Minnesota community, *Minnesota Reads* will anchor the Museum's work in the community. While the exhibit tours regionally, the Museum will conduct a menu of services based on the communities' needs, including community outreach, parent/child classes for families, and professional development classes for early childhood educators.

An advisory board of literacy specialists, early childhood specialists and leaders from throughout the state will be formed to help the Museum develop *Building Early Literacy Together*. Board members will advise on content development, community sites and needs, and process and contacts.

Summary of Request *continued*

We hope to embody the role of lead partner with parents, caregivers and educators in a physical and transformative exhibit that will highlight and underscore the importance of early literacy for children. We seek to embed a deeper commitment to reading in families and in so doing, improve literacy skills for young children. Funding from the Cultural Legacy Fund will support the development of *Building Early Literacy Together*. Our overall goals are as follows:

- ***Bound to Read Exhibit***. Several high-quality, popular children's books will be transformed into immersive environments and engaging experiences that exemplify the joy in reading and its usefulness in daily life.
- ***Minnesota Reads***, an exhibit that will travel regionally and will be based on a well known children's book. Funding from the Cultural Legacy amendment will go towards development, programming and traveling expenses of *Minnesota Reads* around the state for view in other children's museums, libraries, and community gathering places so that children and adults around the state can experience these interactive literacy-based environments.
- ***Develop and implement a strategic partnership roadmap for the Museum***. In conjunction with the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), the Museum will develop a roadmap and evaluation tool for strategic partnership development which will not only form transformative relationships with public and community based organizations but will serve as the blue print for defining and developing mutual capacity building partnerships throughout the state.

Objectives

We will meet our goals through:

- Developing high-quality, state-of-the art exhibits in *Bound to Read* and *Minnesota Reads*.
- Forming a diverse advisory board.
- Maintain high quality child and family focused educational programming.
- Creating immersive experiences and environments, informed by best practices and current research, to engage both children and adults in play and learning—specifically literacy-focused play.
- Ensure *Bound to Read* is accessible to all families through discounts to low-income children and families and schools.
- Create strategic partnerships with a range of organizations.
- Engage communities across the state in early childhood learning and development.

Status on Objectives

Activities for the Minnesota Children's Museum's new literacy initiative, *Building Early Literacy* and the creation of two new exhibits, the national *Bound to Read* and regional *Minnesota Reads*, officially commenced in January 2010. To date, background research into children's early literacy development and best practices has been completed, though the team continues to monitor and include new information, articles, books, etc. related to children's early literacy development.

A design period with an external Advisory Board was held in October 2008, and the recommendations from that meeting and knowledge gained from the research were used to complete the conceptual development incorporated throughout the exhibit and program development process. Concept sketches of two of the exhibit areas were produced to assist with fundraising efforts and provide a visual aid during the process of pursuing book rights. The finalized list of books for the *Bound to Read* and *Minnesota Reads* exhibits include: *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr., John Archambault, and Lois Ehlert, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter, *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Tuesday* by David Wiesner, and *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill.

Status on Objectives *continued*

Licensing has been secured for all of the selected books, with formal contracts in process for the three properties that require them (*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, and *Where's Spot?*). Preliminary development and design of the exhibit is currently underway, and is scheduled for completion at the end of April 2010.

Community investment in Minnesota Children's Museum has built a one-of-kind institution and community resource that strengthens children, families and educators throughout Minnesota. Part of the Museum's durability lies in its success in developing programs that respond to community needs in a cultural destination while meeting the developmental needs of the children it serves. In July 2009 the Museum received partial funding for *Bound to Read* from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Minnesota Children's Museum continues to seek philanthropic funding and corporate sponsorship locally for the balance of the budget to ensure that *Bound to Read* has vitality in the early stages. Since *Bound to Read* has national reach, the Museum is also actively searching for funders at the national level.

Status on Objectives *continued*

Though the Museum continues to actively raise funds for this initiative, timing and availability of initial funding resources required the Museum to adjust the project timeline for a later start date. The exhibit is now scheduled to open in September 2011 rather than April 2011 as outlined in the grant proposal. The revised timeline is included in this report. Though the timeline has shifted, it will not affect the Museum's spending of the funds within the grant period.

Further adjustments to the timetable for this granting period include prototyping, scheduled to begin in April and continue as needed through December 2010. In addition, Detail Development and Design will begin in April, concluding in August 2010, and Program Development will begin in March 2011.

Revised Exhibit Timeline

March 2010

- Preliminary Development & Design: January – April 2010
- Prototyping: April – December 2010
- Detail Development & Design: May – August 2010
- Advisory Board & Internal Review: August 2010
- Final Exhibit Development and Design: September – December 2010
- Exhibit Text Development: January – March 2011
- Bid documents/shop drawings: January – March 2011
- Exhibit Production: March – August 2011
- Program Development: March – August 2011
- Pre-K Literacy Focused Field Trip Development: March – May 2011
- Final Exhibit Text & Graphic Design: April – July 2011
- Web-based Activities Development: June – August 2011
- Graphics production: August 2011
- Exhibit Opens: September 2011
- Web-based Activities Launch: September 2011
- Pre-K Literacy Focused Field Trips Launch: September 2011
- Summative Evaluation and Remediation: Winter 2011/2012
- Exhibit Closes: May 2012

Status on Objectives *continued*

Significant findings or accomplishments in this period

One significant change that occurred during this granting period was the turnover of the original exhibit designer and graphic designer. The Museum has successfully rehired for those positions in addition to hiring a project manager, and props specialist. With a fully staffed team assembled, we are able to continue regular preparation meetings in anticipation of the new launch date for this exhibit.

Other achievements or lessons learned in this period

The Museum is currently gathering a list of museums that have indicated interest in hosting *Bound to Read* and *Minnesota Reads*. Excitement around the exhibit and its focus on early literacy is growing; museums are very eager to join the tour and believe that there is a strong need for early literacy-based exhibits in the field. Plans are underway for marketing the exhibit tour at *InterActivity*, the Association of Children's Museums' annual conference, which Minnesota Children's Museum is hosting in St. Paul this May.

Award

\$500,000 over one biennium through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment.

Between July 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009 Minnesota Children's Museum did not allocate any expenses for *Building Early Literacy Together* to our Legacy grant. Project costs that were incurred during that time period are internal Museum operation costs. As indicated in our proposal, the official start date for the Museum to begin using Legacy grant funds for *Building Early Literacy Together* is January 1, 2010.

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