



**REPORT TO THE STATE OF MINNESOTA
AND THE
MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE ON USE OF FUNDS PROVIDED
THROUGH THE
MINNESOTA ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**



January 14, 2011; Prepared by Michael P. Garcia, President/CEO

Background:

In 2009, the Minnesota Legislature approved Arts and Cultural Heritage funding for the Duluth Children's Museum, Inc. A biennial funding amount of \$500,000 (less one-percent for administrative fees) was appropriated for "*arts, arts access and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.*" Funding was provided under Minnesota Statue Chapter 172, Article 4, Section 2, Subd. 5(1). This report to the legislature is submitted as required by Minnesota Statue 3.195. A previous report was filed in March, 2010. The activities reported at this time build on the early program development previously reported, capture programs through December of 2010 and project planned activities between now and June 30, 2011, the end of the funding period.

Organizational overview:

The Duluth Children's Museum is a place where children begin their lifelong exploration of an ever-expanding world. The mission of the Duluth Children's Museum is to spark children's curiosity. In all of its creative and educational activities, the Duluth Children's Museum:

- Respects the sense of play in children and adults.
- Encourages cooperative and inter-generational play.
- Affirms diversity and an appreciation of differences.
- Brings children and families together to encounter new ideas and learning.
- Engages imagination, intellect, emotions and senses in play and learning.
- Actively maintains a multi-cultural collection as a learning resource.

The Duluth Children's Museum plays a unique and integral role in the Duluth region as it offers children, parents, grandparents, and other caregivers an experience that can't be found elsewhere. With interactive exhibits that invite participation and exploration, this kind of experience is vital to the health development of children.

The Duluth Children's Museum is the fifth oldest children's museum in the country. It opened in 1930 as a resource for children and families to learn more about their world neighbors. The organization's name was changed to the A.M. Chisholm Museum in 1954 following the donation of the Chisholm family residence, which was used as a permanent home for the Museum. In 1975, the Museum relocated to the Depot and it became a member organization of the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center. The organization reclaimed its original name in 1994.

In December of 2009 the Museum purchased a building in Clyde Park on Helm Street in West Duluth to serve as the future home of the Duluth Children's Museum. When

completed, the new facility will provide space for expanded youth and family programming, extending the reach of the Museum to serve the interests of very young children and their adult caregivers up to early to mid-teens through science, technology, engineering, math and arts programming.

Funding secured through the ***Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy Amendment*** has provided an essential platform for programming expansion and has set the stage for this exciting transition. Organizational efforts today are focused on quality, standards based programming in our existing site; expanding our reach to communities through innovative partnership and off-site programming which better demonstrate our expanded potential; and to identify and secure funding sources for the \$4.8M relocation of the Duluth Children's Museum.

Community Access:

Passport to Culture is designed to strengthen the social and cultural networks of low-income families in the Duluth area. Through this program, the Duluth Children's Museum eliminates financial barriers to its services and provides welcoming activities that foster learning and strengthen family and community relationships.

The goal of *Passport to Culture* is to expand community access to the Duluth Children's Museum and strengthen the social engagement of underserved families through involvement in Children's Museum programming. Project objectives are to:

- Partner with area schools, social service agencies, and recreation organizations to identify and engage underserved families.
- Create promotional materials and present informational sessions that inform underserved families about Children's Museum programming.
- Distribute household memberships to underserved families in greater Duluth.
- Host "welcome" sessions for *Passport to Culture* members.
- Promote involvement in Children's Museum exhibitions, events, and education programs throughout the year.

The most significant challenge (and the greatest opportunity), of *Passport to Culture* is to take the program to scale, ensuring all families in the northland who want access to the programs and services provided by the Duluth Children's Museum can become members. Our management strategy has been to balance the scholarship memberships with paid memberships on an annual basis. With over 45% of households in our community who have children in public schools reporting that they have a household income below a commonly acceptable living wage and economic stress growing our ability to expand to the surrounding communities, rural areas and to extend has to be measured and planned.

Over the next biennium, with renewed funding, the focus of activity will be on assessing the economic conditions of the families in the surrounding region; marketing the opportunity a Children's Museum membership represents and developing partnerships

with service providers in our neighboring communities and counties to reach families with young children who would benefit from a membership.

Minnesota State Arts and Cultural Legacy funds are essential to providing regular cultural programming experience to thousands of northland children and their adult caregivers through the Duluth Children’s Museum Passport to Culture program. Community partners report to us the excitement, at times, to the extent of tears of disbelief, of the parents when they are informed that they qualify for an annual membership to the Duluth Children’s Museum.

One method of receiving a membership package is to attend an orientation and welcome session. These sessions have evolved over time and are modified on a case-by-case basis to fit the interest and needs of the families they are designed to serve. A consistent element of all the orientations is to provide a direct museum experience, opening the doors to children and parents to explore the joys and wonders of playing together in an informal community setting while focusing on the importance not only of the interaction between child and adult, but on the joy of learning together in a fun and engaging environment.

Welcome orientations are planned during daytime Museum hours, in the early evening after public hours or to coincide with other program activity schedules to ensure a mix of opportunities for parents to participate. To date **we have hosted 22 orientation and welcome sessions with a total attendance of 645 individuals.**

Reporting date	Passport to Culture Memberships	Total memberships	Total number of Individuals served
June 30, 2009	415	988	5481
March 1, 2010	582	1215	6483
January 1, 2011	879	622	7771

Memberships are a combination of household, daycare centers and grandparent members. The membership statistics reported are for a specific date in time, however monthly records are also tracked and reported internally to balance our program goals.

To date our ***Passport to Culture program*** partnerships have included:

- Families in Transition, a program of Headstart
- Lutheran Social Services
- Friends and Neighbors Childcare Project, a program of ECFE
- Headstart programs at: Nettleton, Barnes, Fond du Lack, Stowe/MacArthur, Grant and Lincoln elementary schools
- YMCA of Duluth
- Salvation Army Duluth Family Service Center
- YWCA Downtown and Spirit Valley, and

Little Treasures Day Care Providers, and
 Arc, Northland
 ISD 709 Special education programs
 Family, Friends, and Neighbors Childcare Project

Community Collaboration in Programming:

A direct outcome of the **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy Amendment** has been the development of a partnership program between the Duluth Children’s Museum and the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra. **Music To You** is an outreach program of the Orchestra intended to bring quality musical experiences to those unlikely to be able to access the traditional setting of the formal symphony performances. There is an emphasis on having the professional musicians of the Orchestra provide interactive and appropriate programs for the audiences **Music To You** serves.

Combining our efforts and resources, **Passport to Culture** joined forces with **Music To You** offering co-sponsored musical performances for our Museum audiences in community partnership program sites.

Music To You; DSSO/DCM Partnership Location	Serving
Salvation Army	15 adults and children
Stowe Elementary	20 Head Start children
MacArthur Elementary	40 Head Start children
Stowe Elementary	20 Head Start children
MacArthur Elementary	40 Head Start children
Nettleton Elementary	30 (3-5yr old) children
Grant Elementary	15 (3-5 yr old) children
Nettleton Elementary	30 (3-5yr old) children
Grant Elementary	15 (3-5 yr old) children
Lincoln Elementary	34 Head Start children
Barnes Early Childhood Center	20 Head Start children
Lincoln Elementary	30 Head Start children
Barnes Early Childhood Center	17 Head Start children

Downtown YWCA	20 Head Start children
Spirit Valley YWCA	25 Head Start children
Circles of Support	30 Adults in transition
Family Night at Lincoln Elementary	10 families and children
Nettleton Elementary (Family Night)	27 adults and children
Spirit Valley YWCA	30 Head Start children (under age 5)
Downtown YWCA	25 Head Start children (under age 5)
Clyde Iron (Duluth Children's Museum Campaign kick-off)	200 adults and children (estimate)

These performances totaled 14 musical experiences and reached 648 individuals.

This program not only brought live musicians into unlikely settings exciting and delighting the people it served, it strengthened the tie between the Duluth Children’s Museum and service providers who provide core services to the most vulnerable families in our community. The partnership forged with Legacy Funds in calendar 2010 will continue into 2011 and with renewed funding will expand over time, serving as a program partnership model.

Early Childhood Educational Programming/*Museum on the Move Trunks:*

Reaching the youngest members of our community, pre-school children, with meaningful program experiences presents some special opportunities. Children in childcare settings and the adult caregivers who provide this service are challenged by transportation of groups of young people in their care. ***Museum on the Move*** is a program developed specifically out of **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy** funding to ensure the youngest members of our region experience quality; standards based educational opportunities that delight and inspire them to want to learn more. The trunk program provides six topics for child care providers to choose from. The trunks are easily transportable and come with content rich materials to allow the adult to guide the children in their creative exploration of the themes covered. The six topics currently offered include:

- The Human Body
- Light and Color
- Math Matters
- Music and Movement
- Spiders and Bugs, and,
- Balls and Ramps

Using Head Start early childhood standards these trunks were developed to ensure the youngest members of our organization have age appropriate and meaningful experiences in the arts. These programs are developed specifically to be offered in the setting they are most familiar with on a day-to-day basis. The educational staff of the Museum are able to assist care givers in the use of these trunks in structuring their day. Feedback provided through an evaluation tool allows us to collect user input and to modify the trunks as needed. Additionally responses gathered have been critical in identifying topics for expansion as we reach further and further with this program.

The long range goal of this program is to expand it in the manner most appropriate and meaningful to audiences throughout all of Northern Minnesota. To that end we need to address transportation and training needs in the communities who demonstrate interest as well as a well reasoned analysis of the number of duplicate trunks it takes to be a regional and/or state service provider. In that the trunks provide consumable products to be used by the site quality control must be maintained to ensure the supplies are replenished an in usable condition between site uses.

School based programs/*Museum on the Move Exhibit Explorations:*

When reported last in March of 2010, ***Museum on the Move Exhibit Explorations*** was in the planning, development and fabrication stage. This program draws on the over 15,000 cultural artifacts of the Museum as one means to make meaningful connections with elementary aged school children. At the same time we are developing a model of expanding the classroom resources for formal education, allowing teachers to draw on the strength of a community based organization to augment and strengthen their teaching objectives.

"Turn Back The Clock", an exhibit based on history/social studies standards, was the first program field tested at Lakewood Elementary School in ISD 709. This was an intensive, seven week standards based museum experience, transforming an empty classroom into an on-site mini-museum. Topics covered included transportation, clothing, food and entertainment. A curator in residence was provided for both teacher training and for direct student interaction. With 12 teachers participating in the program (the entire school) there were 42 teacher contact hours during the program. All 300 students in the school participated for 30 minute sections each week for a total of 1,050 student contact hours.

Using inquiry skills students developed "Museum boxes" that told stories of themselves and their families, while transforming an otherwise empty classroom into an museum exhibit space for their creations. When their work was completed, professional cases developed specifically for this program were introduced to the school from the fabrication studio of the Duluth Children's Museum, representing the four thematic

content areas the students worked on as a basis for their own creative products. The introduction of the Museum cases allowed them to compare and contrast their experiences with those of people from previous generations, challenging them to imagine what it might have been like growing up in a different time.

Post-experience surveys were conducted of both the teachers and the students. 97% of the post-experience surveys (11 of 12) were completed and returned. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree the range of the average rating on the first section of the teacher survey was from 4.56 to 5.00. The overall experience received a perfect rating of 5.00. 4.56 was the average ranking for the question that asked about the "ease of integration of concepts across content areas" a goal established by the planning committee. Clearly this program was a success for the teachers who benefited from it.

Lakewood Elementary is a K-5 school. A "child friendly" survey was developed, with "reflective conversations" being used to collect feedback from kindergarten students. On a similar 1 to 5 scale or ranking, the combined overall ranking of grades 1 through 5 of the experience was 4.21. We did see a decline in the ranking by grade levels, with Grade 1 ranking it at 4.53 and grade 4 ranking it at an average of 4.00. Given the content, the delivery process and the manner in which teachers handled the opportunity this is consistent with expectations of the curator and the planning committee.

At the time of this report, "Turn Back the Clock" is being offered at Stowe Elementary School and will then travel to Churchill Elementary School in Cloquet, Minnesota. A second experience "Math through Games and Puzzles" is being field tested at Lakewood Elementary School. As part of their participation in the program students will have the opportunity to name the exhibit before it moves to another site.

A third topic which is in developmental stages now is "Science through Sound and Music." The goal of this program is to continue to develop topics as identified by host sites of current program offerings. Our plan is to offer each experience in three school settings during an academic year and to continue to expand the reach of the program throughout our region and state as interest is developed. With the support of the **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy Fund** what the Duluth Children's Museum is seeking to achieve is to debunk myths and negative stereotypes young children and their families have about Museum experiences. Over time we will develop a programmatic link where the school based experiences is tied to a field trip to the Duluth Children's Museum. Ideally this will be developed in a manner that invites them in to be the content experts based on their community school based experience. Exciting and fun, we think so.

DSI (Dig Site Investigation) a one-time classroom experience:

Every child is fascinated by dinosaurs, fossils and rocks. Using staff expertise and real dinosaur bones and fossils in dig boxes the Duluth Children's Museum is opening a new Dig Site program, taking artifacts and dig simulation into classroom settings to help students understand the process of archeology dig sites. Our third Museum First Friday where the Museum stays open the first Friday of each month for family free events featured this topic and drew a crowd of over 400 in a ninety minute program offering. Our initial program offering coincides with this report and on our first effort to provide this program to schools we have offered sessions in two classrooms and have additional commitments to go to 9 additional classrooms in the next month. Washington School in Cloquet is using this offering to integrate it with their second grade dinosaur unit.

Ongoing family program offerings:

As the Museum expands the base of membership, demand for regular quality program offerings has forced the expansion of programs on a daily basis. We have effectively updated our web site to announce our regular program offerings, usually 3 programs in any given day. Additionally we schedule events that we market to the larger public, knowing with a growing membership base we will always serve a crowd. From the date of the last report until the end of June of 2011, the end of this funding period, the Duluth Children's Museum will offer 39 distinct programs ranging from our Museum First Friday program serving between 150 and 500 people per offering to our large scale annual outdoor Bubble Festival which drew approximately 1500 the first year and over 3500 the second year. While we blend other funding sources to support our program activity we are consistent in recognizing support from the **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy fund** as a key funding source for all programs.

Exhibit Development:

A key to repeat visitors and a dynamic experience that invites the visitor to return is creating a fun and changing environment. With the help of a congressional appropriation the Duluth Children's Museum has been able to develop and furnish a fabrication and storage facility for exhibit development. While many in the field rely on purchase and rental of their exhibits we are fortunate to have the facility and the talent in our organization to create world class exhibits.

Our first efforts were to the full fabrication of the components of the Museum on the Move Exhibit Explorations components. Each exhibit that is developed requires the development, design, fabrication and eventual maintenance that our fabrication facility affords. Now we are looking inside the organization at our exhibit space to develop fun and engaging experiences that will replace the reliance on outside sources for key

content in the Museum. While there will always be a balance between need and capacity, and there is a valuable role in hosting special exhibits, the high cost and short duration of traveling exhibits (often the cost is in excess of \$100,000 for a 90 day experience) by developing internal capacity we are strengthening the sustainability of the organization.

This process of product development is especially exciting as we develop the content areas for the new Duluth Children's Museum.

Concluding comment:

It is not possible to overstate the impact of the funding provided by the **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy Fund** on the children who visit the Duluth Children's Museum or who experience the programs in the community, a school or a daycare setting. As one of the few collection based children's museums in the nation, and the fifth oldest children's museum, the Duluth Children's Museum is proud to work with the support of the State of Minnesota to reestablish the Museum as a national model. Being in the mixed use facility of the Depot in Duluth limits our ability to track and report some very important data about our visitorship and the visitor experience, however in the next year we intent to add bar code tracking to our membership cards so we can gather and report data on repeat visitorship. What we know anecdotally from observation is members are visiting on an ever increasing frequency, with some families returning for multiple visits each week.

Our organizational success, and the ability we have to contribute to our mission of **Sparking Children's Curiosity** is a key component of ensuring the children we serve will be better equipped to realize their potential as they continue to grow and explore beyond the boundaries of the Museum or our programming. We welcome any inquiries from any source about our programs, the exhibits we develop and the impact of the **Minnesota Arts and Cultural Legacy Fund** the reader may have.