



2010

**National Medal for
Museum and
Library Service**



INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

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Congratulations to the winners of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Each of you is making your community a better place for learning, working, and living.

—First Lady
Michelle Obama

Contents

01	Our Nation's Highest Honor
02	Conner Prairie Interactive History Park, Fishers, IN
04	Explora, Albuquerque, NM
06	Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA
08	Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS
10	Nashville Public Library, Nashville, TN
12	The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY
14	Patchogue-Medford Library, Patchogue, NY
16	Peter White Public Library, Marquette, MI
18	Rangeview Library District and Anythink Libraries, Adams County, CO
20	West Bloomfield Township Public Library, West Bloomfield Township, MI
22	Previous Winners of the National Medal
25	About the Institute of Museum and Library Services
26	About the National Museum and Library Services Board

Our Nation's Highest Honor

The National Medal for Museum and Library Service is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums. The award celebrates libraries and museums that make a difference for individuals, families, and communities.

Medal winners are selected from nationwide nominations for institutions that demonstrate innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. This year five libraries and five museums have been selected to receive the award. Two institutions are being specially recognized for their roles in advancing global cultural understanding.

The ten institutions honored this year serve communities in both large cities and small towns, with users of all ages. The winners are representative of the great diversity of U.S. libraries and museums and include history, children's, art, and science museums, a botanical garden and public libraries. They all share the common bond of having achieved extraordinary success at reaching out to the communities they serve in effective and inventive ways.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, together with the National Museum and Library Services Board, is proud to congratulate the winners of the 2010 National Medals for Museum and Library Service.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services would like to thank the following for their generous support of the National Medals celebration:



The Institute is proud to partner with

StoryCorps

to document stories that demonstrate the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions.

02 Conner Prairie Interactive History Park

Fishers, IN

Conner Prairie Interactive History Park is an outdoor living history museum renowned for its innovative approach to guest learning. It offers diverse programs that are designed to engage and connect people of all ages and backgrounds, with each other and the past, on 850 beautiful wooded acres. Always searching for ways to inspire curiosity about Indiana's past, Conner Prairie designed Opening Doors, an innovative training program for frontline staff that is being replicated by museums and attractions worldwide. The training program was the 2009 winner of an international prize for the best guest services training approach from the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.

Conner Prairie's highest goal is to remain relevant to guests and the community by encouraging immersion in the past on the grounds, and lifelong learning after. "People remark that the experiences we offer are genuine and memorable. We find that they afford moms, dads, grandparents, and kids moments of shared learning that are meaningful for everyone involved and that continue to resonate afterward," explains Conner Prairie President and CEO Ellen M. Rosenthal.

Experiences are individualized to each guest's previous knowledge, age, and expectations. All guests are encouraged to think through historic occurrences as if they were "in the shoes" of people who lived then. Conner Prairie does this in the daily experience where guests may be challenged to pretend that they are new to town in 1836 Prairietown or are replicating an attempt to fly across the continent in the 1859 Balloon Voyage exhibit. Understanding that educational goals for children must take a different form and method, Conner Prairie promotes hands-on learning through Crafts Corner,

Animal Encounters, and Discovery Station. A new exhibit to open in June 2011 will challenge guests to decide what they might do if asked to defend their state.

Follow the North Star is Conner Prairie's most acclaimed immersion program, giving participants firsthand perspectives of the Underground Railroad as fugitive slaves fleeing from captivity and risking everything for freedom. These experiences take place at night on Conner Prairie's 850-acre campus, and send participants searching for safe houses while being pursued by slave hunters. At times, members of the group are "captured" and taken, simulating for participants the terror and heartache felt when actual runaway slaves were caught on their way to freedom. *Follow the North Star* puts participants directly into the historical moment and forces them to face the very real and difficult decisions made by thousands of slaves. Participants have called the program "transformative," and "one of the most significant experiences of my life."

Conner Prairie's heritage-based programs in four-themed historic areas and its many year-round special programs for the general public and schoolchildren encourage participants to examine how they might have responded in similar circumstances and learn more about themselves in the process.

The experiences at Conner Prairie are informed by some of American history's most formative chapters. And through its interactive programming for guests, Conner Prairie has established itself as a community gathering place, where history can be celebrated and explored in a safe and welcoming environment.



*Left: Follow the North Star nationally acclaimed Underground Railroad program at Conner Prairie.
Middle: 1859 Balloon Voyage exhibit that recreates the first air mail delivery in the United States, Lafayette, Indiana.
Right: Experience the lives of the Lenape Indians in one of Conner Prairie's earliest historic areas.*

Address

13400 Allisonville Road
Fishers, IN 46038

Web site: www.connerprairie.org

Phone: 317-776-6000

Annual Budget: \$9,816,000

Full-time Staff: 85

Part-time Staff: 200

Director: Ellen M. Rosenthal

Community Partners

Town of Fishers, Fishers Arts Council, Fishers Cultural Alliance, Indiana Humanities Council, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Indyhub, Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Bureau, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, University of Indianapolis, The Children's Museum, Indy Reads Literacy Organization, Indianapolis Zoo, La Plaza, State of Indiana—Office of Energy and Defense Development, Ball State University, Taylor University, Purdue University, Nickel Plate Arts Trail, Third Phase Shelter, Food, and Clothing Pantry, Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Indiana Foodways Alliance.

04 Explora

Albuquerque, NM

On any given day at Explora, a visitor may come across children using pipettes to mix colors in test tubes, a father showing his son the mechanics behind musical instruments, teenage friends tinkering with electricity, or a grandmother watching her daughter and granddaughter exploring the *Water of Life; Life of Water* exhibit area. Focused not on the transfer of information but on the development of thought, Explora offers its community more than 550 inquiry-based programs and exhibits that encourage critical thinking and foster lifelong science learning.

The school-age population in Explora's local service area is 51 percent Hispanic, 38 percent Anglo, 5 percent Native American, and 4 percent African American. Of these children, 59 percent receive free or reduced-cost meals at school and 44 percent live in bilingual homes. Explora has developed many bilingual programs to engage this population in science education. For preschoolers and their caregivers, Explora offers the biweekly Growing a Scientist program, in which children and parents learn basic science principles through playful experiences. Teens on free or reduced-price school lunch can participate in the Youth Intern Program, where they learn to facilitate scientific programs for children at Explora's summer camps. During the school year, these same teens take Explora exhibits into their communities, using their expertise to make science learning come alive for their families and neighbors.

Through its Classroom Explorations initiative, Explora has developed more than 200 science programs that travel to every county in New Mexico, and have served 86 of the state's 89 school districts. Building on school curricula, these programs aim to improve STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education for every child they reach. Teachers are grateful to have these programs in their classrooms, noticing a difference in students' understanding of complex scientific subjects. One educator noted, "As we discuss various scientific concepts, [my students]

now have a quicker, more accurate grasp because of the hands-on activities you provided."

Back at the museum, Explora has developed a worldwide reputation for developing small-scale exhibits with transactive qualities. Both the exhibits and their users can change in unexpected ways, and the exhibits retain evidence of previous activity. Explora's exhibit environments are designed as semiprivate spaces to support prolonged engagement, focused and thoughtful inquiry, and easy conversation.

With these transactive exhibits, Explora is able to engage families, not just children, in scientific activity at their Family Science Nights for Title I school attendees. These special evenings give students, teachers, principals, and extended family members the opportunity to investigate Explora's multi-outcome exhibits and follow their own lines of thinking in a safe, bilingual environment (45 percent of Explora's staff is bilingual and 60 percent work directly with visitors). The design of Explora's exhibit areas promotes family learning and collaboration, with plenty of seating at each exhibit station and comfy chairs for grandma and grandpa, or a nursing mother. "Our goal is to be inclusive," explains Paul Tatter, associate director. "The more comfortable people are at Explora, the more freely ideas flow at the exhibit areas, and the more people of all ages learn." This multigenerational focus has enduring results, with more than 5,600 families holding memberships. What's more, of these families, 71 percent visit Explora three or more times each year; 61 percent visit four or more times; and 262 families visit more than 20 times a year, indicating that Explora plays a significant role in many families' lives.

Explora is a new kind of learning place, providing real experiences with real things that put people's learning into their own hands. And with hundreds of transactive exhibits and programs for the young and old alike, Explora is positioned to rejuvenate the spirit and enthusiasm for learning for generations to come.



Left: Explora's semiprivate exhibit spaces support thoughtful, prolonged engagement.
Middle: Open-ended materials encourage visitors of all ages to create their own learning experiences.
Right: Intergenerational project at Laguna Rainbow Center/Explora Science Club, where the oldest member is 101.

Address

1701 Mountain Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104

Web site: www.explora.us

Phone: 505-224-8300

Annual Budget: \$4,017,035

Full-time Staff: 67

Part-time Staff: 40

Director: Patrick Lopez

Community Partners

Albuquerque Astronomical Society, Albuquerque Chamber Soloists, Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque Theater Guild, American Chemical Society, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, ARCA, Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation, City of Albuquerque, Coalition for Educators of Native American Children, Cuidando Las Familias, Cuidando Los Niños, Intel, KNME, Laguna Rainbow Center, National Hispanic Cultural Center, National Museum of Nuclear Science and History, New Day Shelter, NM Adoption Exchange, NM MESA, NM Museum of Natural History and Science, NM Symphony Orchestra, Opera Southwest, PNM, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Sandia National Laboratories, Sawmill Neighborhood Association, Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, University of New Mexico College of Education, 19 small-town libraries, community centers, and museums.

06 Japanese American National Museum

Los Angeles, CA

Beginning in early 1942, tens of thousands of Japanese Americans were expelled from their homes on the West Coast and parts of Hawai'i and sent to detention camps across the country for the remainder of World War II. This tragic event indelibly shaped the Japanese American experience and, by extension, the work of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California. Established in 1985, the mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote the understanding of America's diversity by sharing the experiences of Japanese Americans.

Through its many programs and exhibits, the museum interprets for audiences locally and nationwide the complex issues of democracy, pluralism, and civil liberties. *Fighting for Democracy: Who is the "We" in "We, the People"?*, through onsite and travelling exhibitions, shares the diverse perspectives of seven ordinary citizens of different races, genders, and backgrounds, whose lives and communities were forever changed by World War II. "We developed *Fighting* to show visitors that democracy isn't static: it's a work in progress," says President and CEO Akemi Kikumura Yano. "Americans are granted some inalienable rights, and we the people must always work to protect those rights." *Fighting* has travelled to the National World War II Museum in New Orleans and the National Archives in Washington, D.C., inspiring people across the country to think critically about freedom.

Most recently, the museum completed *Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah*, a major partnership project that focused on the WWII experiences of Japanese Americans and engaged teachers, scholars, community members, and educational/cultural institutions in the development of curriculum that has since been implemented in all five states. *Enduring Communities*

culminated in the national conference, "Whose America? Who's American? Diversity, Civil Liberties and Social Justice," which included a tour of Amache, Colorado's detention camp, by students from the local Granada High School. As part of their school's *Enduring Communities* curriculum, these students had been recruited to act as docents at Amache, and attendees noted that the students' accounts of the struggles faced by camp detainees were deeply touching, moving to tears the former inmates themselves.

Back at the museum, exhibits engage and educate the diverse Los Angeles community—including 25,000 students annually—by appealing to feelings of identifying with more than one race, a struggle understood by many Japanese Americans. In 2006, the museum exhibited *kip fulbeck: part asian, 100% hapa*, a series of photographs of people from all walks of life with mixed-race heritage. Hapa, the Hawaiian word for "half" and a slur for people of multiple ethnicities, is turned on its head in this exhibit and embraced as a term of pride. Proving to be a wildly popular exhibition with its community, the museum is now showing a second exhibit by Fulbeck called *Mixed: Portraits of Multiracial Kids*. This family-friendly exhibition for all ages offers a playful yet powerful perspective on the complex nature of contemporary American identity, and, more important, encourages attendees to celebrate their own individuality.

The Japanese American National Museum works to explore American history through the lens of Japanese American experiences, emphasizing the importance of understanding and appreciating all of America's diversity. Through the museum's programming, people of all backgrounds—even those who do not identify as multiracial—are able to see themselves in the people depicted and embrace their common humanity.



*Left: A red silk kimono featured in the museum's *Textured Lives* exhibition.
Middle: A student participant in the *Whose America? Who's American?* Youth Expo shares his project.
Right: A granddaughter and grandmother experience a national conference together at the museum.*

Address

369 East First Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Web site: www.janm.org

Phone: 213-625-0414

Annual Budget: \$6,869,000

Full-time Staff: 39

Part-time Staff: 10

Director: Akemi Kikumura Yano, Ph.D.

Community Partners

Arab American National Museum, Aratani Foundation, Bishop Museum, California African American Museum, Denzho, Field Museum, James Irvine Foundation, Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation, Little Tokyo Community Council, New York University, The Nippon Foundation, Maui Arts and Cultural Center, Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil, Self-Help Graphics & Art, University of Arkansas, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Colorado, UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Terasaki Foundation, and educational and cultural institutions throughout the world.

08 Mississippi Museum of Art

Jackson, MS

As Director Betsy Bradley says, “The Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) is just that: not merely an art museum, but an art museum in Mississippi.” The museum embraces its Mississippi roots in all of its programming, and is continually grounded in a sense of place that contributes, with richness and depth, to the understanding of the cultural identity of the state and its people.

The feeling of welcome at the museum is immediate: the MMA’s front doors open into a coffee shop and café. Visitors pass through a light-filled lobby and multipurpose spaces before reaching the galleries. These design elements came about when the museum built its new facility in 2007. With a stone wall around its former home and a difficult-to-find entrance, community members didn’t feel that the old museum was accessible to them. The new building embodies the MMA’s mission “to engage Mississippians in the visual arts.” Since its move, the museum welcomes twice the number of visitors each year and sees near-capacity audiences at programs.

Further playing to this sense of place at the MMA is its free, permanent exhibition, *The Mississippi Story*. In keeping with native Mississippian Eudora Welty’s observation that “art that is the longest understood is that which is connected to or derived from its place of origin,” *The Mississippi Story* is an evocative account of Mississippi and of being a Mississippian. Art in the exhibition is grouped thematically, including landscapes and scenes of daily life, and quotes from Mississippi authors’ works are featured on the walls. *The Mississippi Story* underscores the museum’s belief that its prime responsibility is to the statewide community it serves, and distinguishes the cultural identity of the region for all museum visitors.

Broadening the academic experience of Mississippi’s youth through meaningful interaction with art is yet another goal of the MMA. Such efforts

are achieved through exhibition- and collections-based programming that pioneers emerging arts education practices. Great strides have been made through a partnership with the U. S. Department of Education’s 21st Century program and Jackson Public Schools. This afterschool initiative, utilizing the museum’s classrooms, integrates art instruction with school-based curricula to enhance the academic performance of elementary and junior-high students. The success of the 21st Century/Jackson Public Schools/MMA alliance led to the museum’s *Spring Break Artist-in-Residence Program*, which was designed to give low-income students a constructive activity during spring break. These and other programs offered at the MMA are invaluable to the participants, as they are often the students’ only opportunity to enjoy quality, out-of-school programming.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina displaced thousands of Louisianans and Mississippians, many of whom relocated to Jackson. Seeing a chance to help these new community members, the MMA, in partnership with Ask 4 More Arts, Jackson Public Schools, and Parents for Public Schools, responded immediately with *Life Shards*, a sixteen-week art program that reinforced the concept that beauty, in its various forms, can emerge from widespread devastation. Using actual debris from the Gulf Coast, families gathered on Saturdays to work with a licensed art therapist to create mosaics and other art forms. Participants—many of whom lost their homes and livelihoods—said that the program provided “much-needed stability in the aftermath of the storm.”

Through multidisciplinary programs, permanent installations, and travelling exhibitions of regional, national, and international scope, the MMA works ceaselessly to remain relevant to a community whose mere existence is the inspiration for all of its work.



*Left: Children participate in Kaleidoscope Summer Art Camp projects.
Middle: Visitors enjoy food and live music in the garden.
Right: Museum staff members carefully clean a pre-Columbian installation.*

Address

380 South Lamar Street
Jackson, MS 39201

Web site: www.msmuseumart.org

Phone: 601-960-1515

Annual Budget: \$2,009,500

Full-time Staff: 25

Part-time Staff: 20

Director: Betsy Bradley

Community Partners

Barksdale Reading Institute, Barr Elementary School, City of Leland, Mississippi, Crossroads Film Festival, Delta Council, Downtown Jackson Partners, Eudora Welty Foundation, Girl Scouts of Middle Mississippi, Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Jackson State University, Jackson Public Schools, Jim Henson Delta Boyhood Exhibit, Millsaps College, Mississippi Arts Commission, Mississippi Association of School Superintendents, Mississippi Economic Council, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, Operation Shoestring, Parents for Public Schools, St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral, Tougaloo College, University Press of Mississippi, Whole Schools Initiative.

10 Nashville Public Library

Nashville, TN

In Nashville, Tennessee, the mayor doesn't ask if he should include the public library in new initiatives—he asks *how*. Driven by the needs of its community, the Nashville Public Library is a leader in efforts to continually improve and enrich its city.

The Nashville Public Library has 264,958 active cardholders, who (based on voluntary demographics gathering) accurately mirror the diversity in their community. With these numbers in hand, the library makes concerted efforts to reach its entire constituency through outreach and public programming that is educational and fun. For at-risk children, the library uses its vast collection of marionettes to present the program *Bringing Books to Life* at local day care centers. Children are treated to a marionette-performed story time, and teachers and parents see firsthand the effects on information retention and engagement when visual stimulation is tied to literature. Last year, *Bringing Books to Life* served 6,619 children in the Nashville area.

All sixteen public high schools in Nashville are also getting a boost from the library via the *Limitless Libraries* program. *Limitless Libraries* connects these school libraries with the Nashville Public Library to create a system for interlibrary loans and help them meet state standards. “We are helping to upgrade education in our city,” explains Director Donna Nicely. “Kids can now check out books from libraries across Nashville from the comfort of their school library—we’ve given them completely open access to our materials.” And the results have been amazing: in the first month of operation, the public library has loaned hundreds of items to the high school students.

Back at the library, marionette-based programs are developed with Nashville's diverse community in mind. With growing populations of Asian, Southeast Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, African, and Eastern European immigrants living in the Nashville area, the library knew that a great way to welcome people from these areas of the world—as well as educate local Nashvillians on their new neighbors' cultures—was to create puppet shows

based on the storytelling traditions from these communities. These shows have received warm and appreciative receptions, and serve as first glimpses for many into the traditions of people from all over the world.

This year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services is recognizing one library and one museum for their work to advance global cultural understanding. The Nashville Public Library has been chosen for this distinction due to the connections it's made with Nashville's sister city, Magdeburg, Germany, also home of one of Europe's oldest and most well-respected puppet theaters. In 2004, during a weeklong Sister Cities celebration, the German city filled the library's lobby with more than 100 puppets and sent along puppeteers to perform at the library for the week. This experience inspired the first Nashville's International Puppet Festival, which brought troupes from China, Italy, Germany, France, and the United States to perform with their puppets at the library, dazzling and educating more than 15,000 adults and children over one weekend.

While celebrating the differences of communities around the globe, the library also recognizes the importance of exploring the history of race relations at home. An important part of the Civil Rights movement, many Nashville students and citizens took part in the sit-ins, freedom rides, and other historic moments during the 1950s and 60s. To honor these courageous Nashvillians, the library opened the Civil Rights Room, which tells the stories of these heroes through oral histories and visuals. Recently, the library featured an exhibit on the fall of the Berlin Wall in this room—courtesy of its connections in Magdeburg—drawing the connection between the United States' and Germany's struggles to reunite their broken countries after periods of great turmoil.

Through its work to improve literacy and embrace diversity, the Nashville Public Library is a partner capable of bringing significant change and good to its beloved community.



*Left: The Civil Rights Room honors the many Nashville citizens who played a critical role in the Civil Rights movement; photo by Gary Layda. Middle: Daycare children enjoy the books they receive in the *Bringing Books to Life!* program. Right: Teatro San Carlino from Rome, Italy, performs with members of the Nashville Symphony during Nashville's International Puppet Festival in 2008; photo by Gary Layda.*

Address

615 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37219

Web site: www.library.nashville.org

Phone: 615-862-5800

Annual Budget: \$21,920,735

Full-time Staff: 250

Part-time Staff: 55

Director: Donna Nicely

Community Partners

Adventure Science Center, Cheekwood Botanical Garden & Museum of Art, Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum, Estoy Aprendiendo, Friends of Nashville Public Library, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Martha O'Bryan Center, McNeilly Center for Children, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Nashville Ballet, Nashville Career Advancement Center, Nashville Children's Theater, Nashville International Center for Empowerment, Nashville Public Library Foundation, Nashville Public Radio, Nashville Public Television, The Nashville Shakespeare Festival, Nashville Symphony, Oasis Center, Sister Cities of Nashville, St. Luke's Community House, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Tennessee Repertory Theatre, Vanderbilt University.

12 The New York Botanical Garden

Bronx, NY

A tree may grow in Brooklyn, but at the center of the Bronx, thousands of plants, herbs, fruits, vegetables, and trees thrive on 250 acres of preserved green space carefully cultivated and maintained by The New York Botanical Garden. First and foremost an advocate for the plant kingdom, the Botanical Garden uses its expertise and unparalleled facilities to present programs, events, exhibitions, and classes that emphasize the importance of environmental conservation, healthy living, and science education, as well as strengthen the community.

Twenty-two years ago, the Bronx was overrun with abandoned lots and buildings, and neighborhoods were losing their sense of community. To help turn this situation around, the garden piloted *Bronx Green-Up*, a horticulture outreach program that works with community groups to beautify, stabilize, and revitalize urban neighborhoods by planting public gardens in abandoned spaces.

These gardens are maintained by local residents and reflect the diverse backgrounds of their gardeners, bearing fruits, vegetables, and herbs popular among the Bronx's Hispanic, African American, White, and Asian communities. Since its inception, *Bronx Green-Up* has created more than 300 community and school gardens and urban farms throughout the borough. The project helps "food desert" neighborhoods learn more about the value of healthy eating while providing access to locally grown fruits and vegetables. Through its innovative community-centric work, *Bronx Green-Up* has helped spur a health-conscious renaissance in the Bronx.

To further promote the enjoyment of fresh, local produce, the garden hosts a weekly, seasonal Greenmarket that is attended by hundreds of New York City residents, 75 percent of whom are from the Bronx. The popularity of the market inspired Heart Smart, which offers screenings for obesity-related diseases by local hospitals, among other programs. For kids, the garden runs the *Children's Gardening Program*, which combats childhood obesity and creates a sense of accomplishment by having participants plant, weed, water, and harvest their own plots in the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden.

"I have never seen such a profound learning moment as children who harvest a head of broccoli and to the great surprise of their parents go on to taste the vegetable that they never before would try," notes Jennifer Rothman, associate vice president for children's and public education. "I have been teaching for a long time and no other lesson I have taught has such an immediate impact."

Students across the Bronx do not have to participate in the gardening program to increase their awareness of the value of plants and ecology. Through the *Children's Education Program*, 78,000 students each year are hosted at the garden and develop science literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) learning skills through informal, hands-on science activities in an array of imaginative learning facilities. Additionally, their teachers (there were 3,100 teacher visits in 2009) can take advantage of professional development opportunities at the garden, learning how to use its numerous resources to help their students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for their environment.

This year the Institute of Museum and Library Services is recognizing one museum and one library for their work to advance global cultural understanding. The garden has been chosen for this distinction due to its cutting-edge work in worldwide botanical research, conservation, and horticulture technology and display. One of the garden's most renowned international initiatives, the Institute of Economic Botany (IEB), is dedicated to the study and understanding of the relationships between people and plants, including plant-based medicine, sustainable agriculture, and forestry. In a time of rapid global change, the IEB works to further the conservation of Earth's plant species by studying how plants are used in traditional cultures, conducting research on medicinal properties, and advocating for their conservation.

Each year The New York Botanical Garden welcomes more than 750,000 visitors, one-third of whom reside in the Bronx. The garden views its mission, in part, as using plants to battle hunger, obesity, and declining science learning trends with programs tailored specifically to meet real community needs.



Left: The seasonal, weekly Greenmarket provides thousands of Bronx residents each year with fresh produce.
Middle: Dr. Michael Balick performs field research on the Micronesian island of Pohnpei for the Institute of Economic Botany.
Right: The Garden's youngest visitors enjoy the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

Address

200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard
Bronx, NY 10458

Web site: www.nybg.org

Phone: 718-817-8700

Annual Budget: \$60,175,806

Full-time Staff: 435

Part-time Staff: 170

President: Gregory Long

Community Partners

Albert Einstein College of Medicine, American Heart Association, Bronx Arts Ensemble, Bronx Community College, Bronx Land Trust, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Bronx Institute, Bronx River Alliance, Columbia University Medical Center, Fordham University, GreenThumb, GrowNYC, JPMorgan Chase & Co., MetLife Foundation, Montefiore Medical Center, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Education, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Poetry Society of America, St. Barnabas Hospital, Sustainable South Bronx, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Urban Advantage.

14 Patchogue-Medford Library

Patchogue, NY

The Patchogue-Medford Library in Patchogue, New York, got its start in the late 1880s with just 635 books in the side room of a shoe store. Then adopted by Sorosis, a national women's suffrage organization, and later funded by Andrew Carnegie, the library has gone through numerous iterations during its more than one hundred-year history. Yet through these years of change and growth, the mission of the library has remained focused on what it sees as the ultimate goal for all Patchogue and Medford citizens: literacy. Basic literacy, information literacy, and life skills literacy drive the programming at the library, making it an indelible part of its community.

And at the library, the importance of community cannot be overemphasized. With a population that is 24 percent Hispanic, the library sees its charge as bringing quality programming to both the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities, combining the two groups for mutually beneficial learning experiences whenever possible. For children, bilingual story times are sometimes the first experience they have hearing a language other than the one spoken at home. At local Head Start and Early Head Start centers, books in English and Spanish, bilingual literacy kits, activities, and parenting materials are donated by the library for children and their families. Teens meet at the library's Language Café to practice conversational Spanish, with English-speaking teens learning from their Spanish-speaking peers. These opportunities provide Spanish-speakers with a self-esteem building opportunity, and help English-speakers work on their language skills.

Patchogue-Medford's Spanish-speaking population is further served through partnerships between the library, Literacy Suffolk, Inc., and the Patchogue-Medford School District. In a collabora-

tive community project, classes in ESOL, Citizenship, and Spanish language computer instruction were offered to more than 2,100 adult students. In addition, the library coordinates ongoing Spanish language and bilingual informational workshops on immigration, fair housing, health awareness, and more with local agencies.

Viviendo en la Villa de Patchogue, or Living in the Village of Patchogue, was created in response to a Spanish-speaking patron's interest in learning how Patchogue Village works. The panel, which consisted of village staff, the mayor, and representatives from the Housing Department, Public Safety, and the local court, drew over 100 attendees, and directly resulted in the addition of bilingual staff at the village and the beginning of translating important municipal forms into Spanish. With the help of important community partners, like the Patchogue-Medford School District and village government, the Patchogue-Medford Library has been able to give a voice to its Hispanic population.

It is because of this sense of inclusion at the library that, when tragedy struck the Patchogue community—highlighting the sometimes tense relations between the Spanish- and English-speaking communities—the library was a place where all Patchogue and Medford citizens felt welcome and safe. “After the tragedy, we were the bridge connecting the Latino and Anglo communities,” explains Director Dina McNeece Chrils. “People came here to grieve, talk, and connect, and the library was a neutral place where our town's healing process could begin.”

Patchogue-Medford Library is about literacy in all its forms, from reading books to reading one another. And through its tireless work, the library is poised to play an important role in the lives of its citizens for another hundred years.



*Left: Children create papel picado banners as part of the Day of the Child/Day of the Book festival.
Middle: A family participates in a scarecrow-making program in the library's courtyard.
Right: ESOL classes at the library.*

Address

54-60 E Main Street
Patchogue, NY 11772

Web site: www.pmlib.org

Phone: 631-654-4700

Annual Budget: \$7,787,429

Full-time Staff: 46

Part-time Staff: 100

Director: Dina McNeece Chrils

Community Partners

Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Village of Patchogue, Patchogue-Medford School District, Greater Patchogue Chamber of Commerce, Patchogue-Medford Youth and Community Services, Patchogue-Medford Friends of the Library, Unity Coalition, Long Island Head Start, Literacy Suffolk, Inc., Fundación Lucero de America, Long Island Latino Teachers Association, Suffolk County Office of the Aging, Suffolk County Police Department, Talento Latino Radio, Hagedorn Foundation, Herstory Writers Workshop, Rotary Club of Patchogue, Pilot Club of Patchogue, Medford Chamber of Commerce.

16 Peter White Public Library

Marquette, MI

“If it’s happening, it’s happening here” is the sentiment shared by residents of Marquette, Michigan, about the Peter White Public Library (PWPL). And they have the numbers to prove it. Even with a budget of just \$1.6 million (a whopping 10 percent of which is fundraised by library staff and volunteers), PWPL boasts circulation and attendance figures three times that of other libraries its size in Michigan. Residents of Marquette clearly consider PWPL to be an integral part of the community, and through its programs and services that challenge patrons to expand their knowledge, the library is happy to fulfill this role.

As a learning hub for so many of Marquette’s residents, the Peter White Public Library takes its mission to inform its community seriously, not retreating from programs based on sensitive topics. One such program was *Fine Line*, a collection of photographer Michael Nye’s powerful black-and-white portraits of people affected by mental illness, which the library brought to Marquette with the help of funds raised by local health organizations. Accompanying the photos were first-person narratives by the subjects of the photos, describing the role of mental illness in their lives. The positive response to this moving exhibition was overwhelming, inspiring the library to create *Your Mind Matters*, a three-month series of events based on the theme of mental health, which brought in partners from health organizations across Marquette to lead discussions on education, treatment, and understanding.

These programs created, for the first time, a community dialogue around mental health and garnered widespread praise. One participant (and mental illness sufferer) said, “I don’t feel like a second class citizen anymore—everyone here is trying to understand mental illness and find ways to help.” Another noted, “The library is a safe place to discuss mental illness. People don’t know that I have a mental illness—they

think I am here to learn, just like they are.” This feeling of safety, necessary to the discussion of often-misunderstood topics, was earned by the library through its thoughtful community programming and opens the door for many of its educational series.

PWPL is also dedicated to providing opportunities for Marquette residents to learn more about the cultures of the world. In conjunction with a local film expert, the library inaugurated *CineArts*, a series featuring foreign films. Before each movie, a Northern Michigan University professor introduces the film, and afterwards, engages the audience in a lively post-film discussion. In 2009, PWPL hosted *Global Tales Storytelling Festival*, featuring renowned African American storyteller Bobby Norfolk, a Paul Bunyan puppet show, and a dance by the Kivajat Children’s Finnish-American Folk Dance Group. And once a year, hundreds of people show up to the library’s *Bollywood Night*, which celebrates the film, music, food, and dance of India. Through these programs, awareness of other cultures is fostered in the community, and the traditions of those small populations of foreign-born citizens in Marquette are celebrated.

The library is also a huge proponent of the arts, strategically partnering with its building-mate, the City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center (CMACC), to sponsor youth theater, festivals, and battle of the bands shows. Together, PWPL and MACC encourage the creativity of Marquette’s youth, providing entertainment to the community in the process.

“There are so many stories here, and they’re not all on the shelves,” shares Director Pam Christensen. Through strategic partnerships and constant fundraising, the library is able to provide the programs necessary to promote acceptance and engage people from all walks of life and, in the process, become an indelible part of its community’s story.



Left: Teen Advisory Board Open Door project.

Middle: Food Art program inspires creativity and healthy choices.

Right: Community members view the Fine Line photography exhibit.

Address

Peter White Public Library
217 North Front Street
Marquette, MI 49855

Web site: www.pwpl.info

Phone: 906-228-9510

Annual Budget: \$1.6 million

Full-time Staff: 14

Part-time Staff: 27

Director: Pamela R. Christensen, MLS

Community Partners

Friends of PWPL, Marquette Arts and Culture Center, Northern Michigan University, Michigan Humanities Council, Michigan Center for the Book, Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs, Marquette General Health System, NAMI– Alger/ Marquette, Michigan State University, Superiorland Library Cooperative, Hiawatha Music Cooperative, U.P. Children’s Museum, Marquette County History Museum, Marquette Maritime Museum, Pathways, Great Lakes Recovery Center, Snowbound Books, Superior Watershed Partnership, Lake Superior Art Association, Great Lakes Center for Youth Development, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

18 Rangeview Library District and Anythink Libraries

Adams County, CO

In 2009, the Rangeview Library District (RLD) underwent a major overhaul. Realizing that the traditional structure of the library no longer worked for its busy, growing Adams County, Colorado, community, the RLD took a calculated risk and decided to re-engineer library services and question even the most basic library operations. With the optimistic and flexible “Anythink” as its modus operandi, the library district now focuses on the needs of its customers and is witnessing amazing results.

The first “typical” element of the library to go was the Dewey Decimal System. This decision came after years of staff watching patrons struggle to use the library, and was corroborated by focus groups at the nearby Denver Public Library, which indicated that Dewey was not intuitive for library goers. Now organized by words (like cooking, home, and travel) instead of numbers, the library’s new “WordThink” system is user-friendly and well-loved by the community.

“An older gentleman came up to me after we changed from Dewey to ‘WordThink,’ and I thought, ‘Oh, he probably wants to tell me that he preferred the old system,’” shares Director Pam Sandlian Smith. “So you can imagine my surprise when, instead of ‘What happened to Dewey?’ he says, ‘What took you so long to get rid of Dewey?’”

Another revolutionary step taken by the library district was to eliminate overdue fines. Today, patrons with overdue materials are reminded to return the item by its due date, and are only charged if they lose the materials. In the end, the library district wants its books, videos, and other materials returned for the enjoyment of all its community members, and isn’t interested in being a part of the punitive collections business.

Summer reading—a staple at most libraries across the country—was also turned on its head.

Inviting community members of all ages (not just the typical audience of children) to participate, *mySummer: Read Think Do* focuses on the quality time that families and friends spend together reading, learning, and exploring new ideas, and not the quantity of books digested in a single summer.

To implement its innovative initiatives, the library overhauled the organization chart and staff development. Job descriptions were revamped, and in addition to traditional work titles, staffers were dubbed “wizards, geniuses, and explorers.” Based on how staff work and interact with others, these informal monikers empower staff to think of themselves in a new way.

This emphasis on individuality carries over into staffers’ work, reminding them that, when developing programs at the library, a mentality of “one size fits all” just isn’t acceptable. At the library district, staffers are assigned to developing programs tailored to different age groups that will encourage them to think critically by developing after-program activities that reinforce the information learned. Staffers who work with teens, for example, revamped the old teen spaces with the addition of computers, comfortable furniture, music, books, and games. The new space regularly draws in hundreds of teens, including homeless and special needs teens, and is a place where many young people can be themselves.

Since the “Anythink” state of mind took over at the library just a few short years ago, attendance at programs has more than doubled and circulation of materials has tripled. The Rangeview Library District’s work is a testament to eschewing conventions, listening to community members, and allowing ideas to flourish, with an ongoing commitment to allowing imagination, optimism, and creativity to guide its work.



*Left: Families create celebratory flags at the July 10 grand opening of the Anythink Wright Farms branch library in Thornton, CO.
Middle: Teens access the online library catalog at Anythink Huron Street branch.
Right: Wii and Guitar Hero are popular pastimes in the children's and teen spaces.*

Address

5877 East 120th Avenue
Thornton, CO 80602

Web site: www.anythinklibraries.org

Phone: 303-288-2001

Locations: 7 branch libraries plus 1 bookmobile

Annual Budget: \$13,329,288

Full-time Staff: 69

Part-time Staff: 34

Director: Pam Sandlian Smith

Community Partners

Adams County Educational Consortium, Adams County Food Distribution Program, Americans for the Arts, Aveda Academy, Azar's Woodcraft, Ambient Energy, Butterfly Pavilion, City of Brighton, City of Thornton, Commerce City, Colorado Public Art Administrators, Denver Urban Gardens, Derby Resource Center, Department of Local Affairs, Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County, Family Place Libraries, Fashion Denver, Group3 Planners, Headstart, Humphries Poli Architects, The Inventing Room, Metro North Chamber, Ricochet Ideas, Tri-County Health Department, Wings Over the Rockies.

20 West Bloomfield Township Public Library

West Bloomfield Township, MI

Tucked among the rambling residential streets and sprawling lakes and woodlands of West Bloomfield Township, Michigan, sits the West Bloomfield Township Public Library. Once a small library serving a homogenous population in the suburbs of Detroit, the library now serves a culturally diverse community. As the population grew and demand for library services skyrocketed, the library maximized its resources in order to have the greatest impact on the community. The library got creative, initiating strategic partnerships with families, schools, nonprofits, and local government agencies to meet the needs of its community.

At the library, the most important partnership is with parents. As their child's first teachers, parents are the people most likely to instill a lifelong love of reading and learning in their child. Through its Grow Up Reading® initiative, the West Bloomfield Township Public Library reinvented its Youth Services Rooms, creating interactive spaces for families to play and learn. "We wanted spaces dedicated to the learning needs of children at different stages of their development. So we consulted early childhood experts and local school professionals and created a LearningScape for babies and toddlers, a PlayScape for older children, and an Activity Center stocked with materials that encourage imaginative play," explains Clara N. Bohrer, library director. "The response from parents has been tremendous—they're so grateful that we've developed spaces where they can engage in activities with their kids, and they're happy that we provide them with handouts that describe how to use the areas to teach their children new skills and ideas."

In this same interactive space, parents are able to meet with medical professionals who evaluate the verbal development of their children while watching them play. Courtesy of a partnership with speech and language pathologists from the local hospital, this program is offered through special

Baby Play Groups at the library and gives parents insight into their child's language acquisition and development in a place that is safe and fun for the child. Piggybacking on this work are the *Keeping Children Healthy* programs offered at the library, during which pediatricians and other health care providers talk to parents about normal physical and emotional development and other important health issues.

To engage local children with special needs in the library community, West Bloomfield established a "branch" at LifeTown, an interactive village where children with disabilities learn life skills. Kids can apply for a library card and check out and return books. Library staff train volunteers to work at the branch and provide services such as book talks to the children.

As an area hit hard by the recent recession, underemployment, unemployment and foreclosures are realities facing many township residents. Taking the lead in providing help during these tough times, the library partnered with Michigan Works (a statewide jobs initiative), county economic agencies, experts from the local community college, the Chamber of Commerce, and area nonprofits to host a number of programs, including job workshops that focus on resume writing, networking, and managing personal finances; computer classes to help residents stay on top of career-relevant technology; and one-on-one job search assistance to those who needed extra help. Through its hard work, the library is helping West Bloomfield Townships residents fight joblessness and secure more stable futures for themselves and their families.

The significance of "it takes a village" is not lost on the West Bloomfield Township Public Library. Partnering with myriad community organizations and members, the library offers the very best to its town, making concerted efforts to enrich the lives of everyone in West Bloomfield Township.



Left: Parents and children find many opportunities to share interactive literacy and learning experiences.
Middle: Soon-to-be kindergartners celebrate “Counting The Days To Kindergarten,” part of the Library’s Grow Up Reading® initiative.
Right: The popular International Language Collection includes books published in many of the languages spoken in West Bloomfield Township.

Address

4600 Walnut Lake Road
West Bloomfield Township, MI 48323

Web site: www.westbloomfieldlibrary.org

Phone: 248-682-2120

Annual Budget: \$6,175,279

Full-time Staff: 23

Part-time Staff: 69

Director: Clara Nalli Bohrer

Community Partners

Beaumont Hospitals, Bloomfield Hills Schools, Ferber Kaufman LifeTown/Friendship Circle, Friends of the Library, Great Start Michigan-Oakland, Greater West Bloomfield Community Coalition, Japanese Business Society of Detroit Foundation, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Vocational Services, Oakland Community College, Oakland County Economic Development Services, Oakland Literacy Council, Optimist Club of West Bloomfield, Walled Lake Schools, West Bloomfield African American Parent Association, West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce, West Bloomfield Historical Society, West Bloomfield Schools/Community Education.

22 Previous Winners of the National Medal (formerly the National Award)

2009

Braille Institute Library Services, Los Angeles, CA
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, Cincinnati, OH
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin, IL
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR
Museum of Science & Industry, Tampa, FL
Pritzker Military Library, Chicago, IL
Stark County District Library, Canton, OH
Tennessee Aquarium, Chattanooga, TN

2008

Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY
The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA
General Lew Wallace Study and Museum, Crawfordsville, IN
Jane Stern Dorado Community Library, Inc., Dorado, PR
Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO
Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY
Miami-Dade Public Library System, Miami, FL
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL
Skidompha Library, Damariscotta, ME
Skokie Public Library, Skokie, IL

2007

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham, AL
Brookfield Zoo of the Chicago Zoological Society, Brookfield, IL
Georgetown County Library, Georgetown, SC
Kim Yerton Branch of the Humboldt County Library, Hoopa, CA
Memphis Public Library & Information Center, Memphis, TN
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC
The Newberry Library, Chicago, IL
Ocean County Library, Toms River, NJ
Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Portland, OR
Vermont Historical Society, Barre, VT

2006

Artrain USA, Ann Arbor, MI
Frankfort Community Public Library, Frankfort, IN
John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, IL
Lincoln Children's Zoo, Lincoln, NE
Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, NC
San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX

2005

COSI Toledo, Toledo, OH
Johnson County Library, Overland Park, KS
Levine Museum of the New South, Charlotte, NC
Mathews Memorial Library, Mathews, VA
Pratt Museum, Homer, AK
Saint Paul Public Library, Saint Paul, MN

2004

Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago, IL
Flint Public Library, Flint, MI
Mayagüez Children's Library, Inc., Mayagüez, PR
The Regional Academic Health Center Medical Library of the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX
Western Folklife Center, Inc., Elko, NE
Zoological Society of San Diego, San Diego, CA

2003

Bozeman Public Library, Bozeman, MT
Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh, PA
Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Pocahontas County Free Libraries, Marlinton, WV
San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo, TX
USS Constitution Museum, Boston, MA

2002

Boundary County District Library, Bonners Ferry, ID
Hartford Public Library, Hartford, CT
Please Touch Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Loretto, PA
Southwest Georgia Regional Public Library System, Bainbridge, GA
Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo, Bronx, NY

2001

Alaska Resources Library and Information Services, Anchorage, AK
Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, San Jose, CA
Hancock County Library System, Bay St. Louis, MS
Miami Museum of Science, Miami, FL
New England Aquarium, Boston, MA
Providence Public Library, Providence, RI

24 Previous Winners of the National Medal (continued)

2000 (the first year libraries participated in the program)

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository, Kodiak, AK
B.B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga, AL
Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, NY
Simon Wiesenthal Center Library and Archives, Los Angeles, CA
Urie Elementary School Library, Lyman, WY
Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia, Beckley, WV

1999

Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, IL
Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV
St. Simons Island Lighthouse Museum, St. Simons Island, GA

1998

Belknap Mill Society, Laconia, NH
Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI
New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ

1997

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
National Aquarium in Baltimore, Baltimore, MD

1996

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
The Field Museum, Chicago, IL
The Natural Science Center of Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

1995

Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn, NY
The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Chicago, IL
Montshire Museum of Science, Norwich, VT
The Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle, WA

1994

Brukner Nature Center, Troy, OH
The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Jacksonville, FL
Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, MO

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

The Institute supports the full range of museums, including art, history, science and technology, children's, natural history, historic houses, nature centers, botanical gardens, and zoos; and all types of libraries, including public, school, academic, research, and archival. Our robust capacity for research, evaluation, policy analysis, grant-making, and partnerships helps make it possible for libraries and museums to be leaders in their communities.

Museums and libraries are among America's leading public institutions, making knowledge available to millions at little or no cost. As public institutions they must meet a very high threshold of mission accountability and use resources wisely for public good. Through grants and information resources, we annually reach thousands of museums and libraries in myriad ways—from providing



much-needed technical assistance for small institutions to establishing national and replicable models, strengthening state networks, and supporting professional development. To aid institutions in program design, we also provide tools for strategic planning and evaluation. Funding from the Institute helps museums and libraries operate effectively and give value to their communities. It also leverages additional public and private support.

Collecting and disseminating results from funded projects, engaging in research, and publishing reports enable the Institute of Museum and Library Services to make a significant contribution to library, museum, and information policy and practice in the United States.

Address

Institute of Museum and Library Services
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036-5802

Web site: www.ims.gov

Phone: 202-653-IMLS

E-mail: imsinfo@ims.gov

26 About the National Museum and Library Services Board

The National Museum and Library Services Board advises the Institute's director on selections for the National Medals. This Board is an advisory body that includes President-appointed and Senate-confirmed individuals with expertise in, or commitment to, library, museum, and information services. Informed by its collectively vast experience and knowledge, the Board also advises the Institute's director on general policy, practices, and coordination with other federal agencies and offices.

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Marsha L. Semmel
Acting Director, IMLS*

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A. Wilson Greene
Virginia

Amy Owen
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Kim Wang
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*nonvoting members



