



2014



National Medal  
for Museum and Library Service





#### **INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES**

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## From the IMLS Director



I am pleased to present the recipients of the 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This year is a very special year as we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the award. For all that time, this recognition has been the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums. It celebrates institutions that make a difference for individuals, families, and communities.

This year's ten honorees exemplify the nation's great diversity of libraries and museums and include an aquarium, botanic garden, science center, children's museum, cultural center, and both large urban and small rural libraries. Medal winners were selected from more than 100 nominations that describe how local libraries and museums touch the hearts and minds of the American public.

Thirty institutions were named finalists this year and each was featured on the IMLS Facebook Share Your Story page. There is no better testimony to these trusted institutions than one can find by a quick review of the comments posted by community members who describe how they were welcomed and inspired to learn, discover new skills and even to try new ways of thinking at local museums and libraries.

We are indebted to our partner StoryCorps, a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans, who will visit each of the medal winners and capture more community stories.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, together with the National Museum and Library Services Board, is proud to congratulate the winners of the 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Sincerely,

Susan H. Hildreth, Director  
Institute of Museum and Library Services

IMLS would like to thank HISTORY 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.

# Brooklyn Botanic Garden

*Engaging children and families in understanding the world of plants is essential, especially in urban areas. City dwellers need gardens.*

*– Scot Medbury, President*



## **Accessibility for All City Residents and Visitors**

To make the facilities and resources widely available, Brooklyn Botanic Garden discounts admission fees for students and seniors, and offers **150 free admission days annually**. Children under 12 and school groups are **always free**.

## **Part of the Fabric of the Brooklyn Community**

Brooklyn Botanic Garden was founded in 1910 as a uniquely urban botanic garden, the land itself reclaimed from its humble past as an ash dump in the late 1800s. Located in the heart of Brooklyn, the garden is publicly accessible by foot, bike, or public transportation, and connects more than 750,000 visitors annually to the world of plants. It also engages more than 200,000 children, teachers, and diverse local neighborhood residents per year through education and community-based programs, with generations visiting the garden regularly as part of growing up in Brooklyn.

The world-class collections provide unique opportunities for public environmental education. More than 12,000 plant species and cultivated varieties, including nearly 300 rare or endangered species, are displayed in 13 distinct garden settings and five indoor, controlled conservancy environments. The garden offers an oasis for the densely populated community of Brooklyn and visitors, helping to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders.

## **Engaging Youth in Environmental Education and Stewardship**

With programs for children from two to 18 years of age, Brooklyn Botanic Garden's extensive education programming offers local youth a chance to grow up exploring plants, harvesting vegetables, and celebrating the natural world through hands-on workshops, lessons in science and urban ecology, crafts, and creative play. This begins with the Children's Garden, founded 100 years ago and a vibrant part of the community today, and is furthered by informal discovery programs that occur throughout the garden annually.

A youth development and leadership program, *Garden Apprentice Program*, also engages nearly 60 students, ages 13-18, annually. The program offers young gardeners exposure to science research, horticulture, and green careers. These youth education programs serve as a critical entry point, providing city children the opportunity to develop lifelong relationships with plants, horticulture, and the environment. Brooklyn Botanic Garden also offers a highly competitive nine-month professional horticulture internship program to nine candidates annually, and in recent years all graduates have quickly received full-time positions with organizations nationwide.



## Partner in Local Education

A core mission of the garden is bridging informal learning with formal environmental and science education, and its suite of educational programs support national, state, and city science standards. The majority of Brooklyn Botanic Garden's school-focused education programs are designed to help close the gap between the most and least advantaged children and assist all students in meeting performance standards. More than 2,000 students and teachers in Brooklyn's Title 1 schools each year participate in classroom lessons by Brooklyn Botanic Garden instructors, teacher trainings, field trips, and hands-on community projects through the garden's *Project Green Reach* program. This initiative introduces the participants to basic science principles, taught within the new science literacy standards.

In 2003, Brooklyn Botanic Garden co-founded the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment with Prospect Park Alliance and the NYC Department of Education to overhaul one of New York City's worst performing public schools, located across the street from the garden. The first environmentally focused public high school in Brooklyn, the school serves a largely minority and underserved population. Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment offers rigorous and engaging curricula incorporating real science, and Brooklyn Botanic Garden often serves as a living classroom by hosting field studies. About 1,200 students have enrolled in the school, and in its ten-year history the school has achieved the considerable feat of graduating four Gates Millennium scholars.

Opposite photo: Spring in the Children's Garden, photo by Caroline Voagen Nelson. Above left: Bee workshop for families. Above middle: The Sterling Street Children's Garden growers show off its winning entry in the 2013 Greenest Block in Brooklyn contest. Above right: Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Visitor Center. Photo by Albert Vecerka/ESTO.

## Brooklyn Botanic Garden

**Address:** 990 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11225-1099

**Phone:** (718) 623-7200

**Web:** [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org)

**President:** Scot Medbury

**Budget:** \$15,278,732

**Full Time Staff:** 133

**Part Time Staff:** 131

## Community Partners

Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Brooklyn Academy of Science & the Environment, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Brooklyn College Environmental Sciences Analytical Center, Brooklyn Community Foundation, Brooklyn Community Garden Alliance, Brooklyn Horticulture Therapy Network, Career Internship Network, Center for Plant Conservation, Cool Culture, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Green Horizons, Greenbelt Native Plant Center, Greenwood Cemetery, Grow to Learn NYC, Magnolia Tree Earth Center of Bedford-Stuyvesant, MetroHort, Million Trees NYC, New York ReLeaf, NYC Compost Project, Sentinel Plant Network, Trees New York, Urban Advantage



# Chicago Public Library

*Libraries play an essential role in building smart, competitive cities. They are strategic tools for unlocking innovation and potential in people.*

*– Brian Bannon, Commissioner*



## International Collaboration

Through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Chicago Public Library will partner with the public library of Aarhus, Denmark to test how library systems can **innovate** to deliver **better service, increase community impact, and be replicable globally**. This year, the library will host the first NEXT Library conference to be held outside Aarhus, Denmark.

## Serving a Vast Community

Through its 80 locations, Chicago Public Library serves scores of diverse neighborhoods, each with unique needs and demographics. More than 1.9 million Chicago Public Library card holders benefit from free access to books, CDs, DVDs, e-books and downloadable media, online databases, computers, Wi-Fi, and programs aimed at helping all Chicagoans to read, learn, and discover their world through multiethnic, culturally sensitive, bilingual library services.

The library is committed to serving Chicago's diverse populations and helping to address community issues. At the same time, it also strives to be a leader in library innovation through programs that foster the 21st-century skills of its patrons.

## Vital Education for All Ages

Of Chicago's 2.7 million residents, all age groups from toddlers to seniors can find dynamic, hands-on programs to promote lifelong learning and skills development. The library's science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM)-focused *Summer Learning Challenge* has expanded beyond reading activity to the larger scope of a learning initiative that includes early learners, teens, and a program component for parents and caregivers to learn with their children. Children are encouraged to read both fiction and nonfiction, learn by attending theatre performances and field trips, advance their creativity through art studies, and solve engineering challenges.

The library also offers programs and resources for adults, including *CyberNavigators*, highly trained computer tutors who teach computer skills to library patrons through one-on-one instruction and public classes. *CyberNavigators* operate in 46 library locations in Chicago communities in great need of technology training. These instructors also help residents research and apply for jobs online, build resumes in workshops, and even navigate health-related information in an effort to close Chicago's digital divide.

## Connecting Youth with Technology—and Success

Chicago Public Library's *YOUmedia* program provides young adults with access to state-of-the-art technology, books, media, and institutions throughout the city. *YOUmedia* offers teens digital skills training and ositive out-of-school activities that engage them



in interest-based projects. The program aims to promote creative thinking and skill building and help diverse teen populations understand and navigate pathways into postsecondary education and meaningful careers based on their interests.

High school *YOUmedia* participants attend workshops in digital music, video and animation, photography, graphic design, and STEM. Teens can also borrow laptops, use gaming stations, attend workshops and programs, create digital media, and use a music recording studio.

## Learning by Making

To advance problem solving, creativity, innovation, and collaboration, Chicago Public Library introduced the city's first free public makerspace funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Maker Lab offers both instructional workshops and open lab hours for customers to work with staff members on personal projects and mastering software. The Maker Lab provides patrons with an introduction to the latest technology and equipment that are enabling new forms of personal manufacturing and business opportunities, including 3D printers, laser cutters, a milling machine, and a vinyl cutter.

Since opening in July 2013, the lab has hosted more than 42,000 visitors. Maker Lab classes have been very popular, with the majority of sessions filled to capacity. The library has taken steps to integrate the Maker Lab with other programs, including *YOUmedia*. Participants in the teen program have the chance to explore the Maker Lab technology during special sessions. Chicago Public Library also hosted Maker Week events, taking parts of the Maker Lab experience to neighborhood branches. In recognition of the success of its Maker Lab, Chicago Public Library has been named one of the winners of the 12th annual Chicago Innovation Awards.

## Chicago Public Library

**Address:** 400 S. State Street

Chicago, IL 60605-1203

**Phone:** (312) 747-4300

**Web:** [www.chipublib.org](http://www.chipublib.org)

**Commissioner:** Brian Bannon

**Budget:** \$104,713,855

**Full Time Staff:** 725

**Part Time Staff:** 185

## Community Partners

Chicago Public Library Foundation, Chicago Community Trust, Museum of Science and Industry, Steppenwolf Theatre, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Society of Midland Authors, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Facing History and Ourselves, Chicago Urban League, Chicago Park District, Art Institute of Chicago, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Casa Central, Illinois Science Council, Chicago Humanities Festival, Digital Youth Network, Tolten Adult & Family Literacy Center, Lincoln Park Zoo, Brookfield Zoo

Opposite photo: *YOUmedia* participants. Above left: Mayor Rahm Emanuel gives a high five to children who participated in *Rahm's Readers "Full STEAM Ahead" Summer Learning Challenge*. Above middle: A library staff member explains a laser cutter template design to a Maker Lab user. Above right: The Harold Washington Library Center.

# The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

*A museum is an institution that educates, inspires, and transforms lives. It serves as a catalyst for community revitalization, and its overall goal is to improve quality of life.*

– Jeffrey H. Patchen, President and CEO



## Recognizing the Power of Children

Collaborating with organizations such as the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the museum created ***The Power of Children: Making a Difference*** exhibit to explore the journeys of three children—Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White—and engage visitors in activities that address issues of discrimination and prejudice.

## Welcoming All Citizens of All Sizes

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis is the world's largest children's museum, greeting 1.2 million visitors annually. Of these patrons, 40 percent come from more than 100 miles away. The 29-acre facility includes 11 permanent exhibits, two traveling/temporary exhibit spaces, a children's theater, a planetarium, a full-service library branch, and a collection of more than 120,000 artifacts and objects.

Despite being a children's museum, it focuses its abundance of immersive experiences on families, with as much to do for parents, grandparents and older children as for young children. From dinosaur fossil displays to a 11,000-pound steam engine to a recreated pirate ship wreck, exhibits and programming were created—in consultation with leaders in the field of universal design and accessibility—to engage adults just as much as children in the learning opportunities.

## Learning in "Real" Settings

In its exhibits and programs, the museum focuses on enhancing the experiences of children and families to facilitate engagement. One of the ways it does this is by using professional, costumed interpreters throughout the galleries to help visitors better understand exhibits and connect more deeply with the subject matter. Patrons are transported to another time and place, meeting Terracotta warriors of ancient China, speaking to the Wright Brothers, or shadowing Egyptian archaeologists.

An exhibit called *Dinosphere* displays genuine dinosaur fossils in realistic environments with lighting and sound effects that shift between day and night. Ranked among the top paleontological exhibits of real dinosaur fossils anywhere in the world, *Dinosphere* portrays how these animals really lived. The exhibit's *Paleo Prep Lab* emphasizes real science, offering kids and adults the chance to interact with actual paleontologists at work.

The museum is collaborating with former NASA astronaut David Wolf who is helping to develop space-focused programs as the first *Extraordinary Scientist-in-Residence*. This partnership offers the rare opportunity for young people to meet face-to-face with a real astronaut while igniting their interest in science, technology, engineering, and math. With his guidance, the museum will introduce a range of new museum programs designed to stimulate youth to discover their passions and have fun in the process.



## Engaging the Neighborhood

The Children's Museum also reaches out to the local community—one of Indiana's poorest neighborhoods. To head off a downward trend in educational opportunities and increased poverty, the museum collaborated with neighborhood nonprofit organizations, businesses, and area residents. This group spearheaded improvement efforts including the creation of a community initiatives department to liaison with community partners and manage museum giveback programs, new loan and gap funds to support housing revitalization efforts, and initiatives to enhance public safety and green spaces. The institution also established the Children's Museum Neighborhood Club, a program through which all families that live within the museum's immediate neighborhood receive free admission year round.

The museum's *Cradle to Career* initiative bridges formal and informal learning through afterschool programs where kids can continue to learn at the museum after their school day. The long-term goal of this program is to provide workforce development tools and scholarships to a local community college—a model that the museum staff hopes will someday transform museums and their neighborhoods nationwide.

## The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

**Address:** 3000 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208-4716

**Phone:** (317) 334-3322

**Web:** [www.childrensmuseum.org](http://www.childrensmuseum.org)

**President and CEO:** Jeffrey H. Patchen

**Budget:** \$25,409,030

**Full Time Staff:** 200

**Part Time Staff:** 125

## Community Partners

Arts Council of Indianapolis, City of Indianapolis, The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, Indiana Arts Commission, The Indianapolis Public Library, Indianapolis Public Schools, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, Lilly Endowment, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Mapleton Fall Creek Neighborhood Association, Mid-North Neighborhoods, Near North Development Corporation, PNC Foundation

Opposite photo: Space-focused programs with former NASA astronaut David Wolf. Above left: Children immersed in learning in the Dinosphere. Above middle: Preschoolers digging in *National Geographic Treasures of the Earth*. Above right: The museum's 472,900-square-foot facility.



# Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

*It's important for libraries to listen to the community and be responsive to its needs, and provide tools, resources, and spaces to help them solve problems.*

*– Jeanne Goodrich, Executive Director*



## **By the Numbers**

According to data provided in the Public Library Association's 2012 Public Library Data Service report, Las Vegas-Clark County Library District is the **14th largest library in the United States** in terms of population served.

Compared to other large American libraries, it ranks **second in circulation per capita, third in circulation per registered borrower, and third in total materials** expenditure per registered borrower.

## **A Data-Driven Approach to Library Service**

Las Vegas-Clark County Library District serves a relatively young metro area with mobile, fragmented, and diverse populations. The area experienced record-breaking growth for five decades prior to the recent economic downturn, which made it difficult for local governments to gather data and track resident activities.

The library district developed a web-based community assessment tool, *CommunityConnect*, which provided staff access to detailed, integrated census, market segment, library cardholder location, and transaction data in its service area. While anonymized, this data offered a picture of different types of households, families, and areas of highest need, which could then be targeted through local branches for services to combat illiteracy and remove barriers to education. The library district used this information to plan programs, marketing, and outreach more effectively, in concert with consumer interest and lifestyles.

## **A Resource and a Lifeline**

Las Vegas-Clark County Library District weathered an unprecedented economic storm in 2008 that saw Las Vegas leading the nation in foreclosures and residents suffering from one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Knowing that many of the 1.5 million people it serves are very reliant on libraries—particularly during recessions when home Internet can be out of reach for many households—the library district made an effort to establish computer labs throughout its service centers. With most employers requiring online application submission, employment assistance became the primary focus for computer lab coordinators and IT facilities crews. It also strengthened partnerships with local agencies with expertise in housing, food, employment search, work readiness, and financial literacy support.



## Supporting Personal and Community Advancement

Las Vegas-Clark County Library District is committed to connecting its community members with tools to pursue their passions and explore lifelong learning, as well as to access education and career opportunities. Its program for adult and English language learning, *Computer Assisted Literacy in Libraries (CALL)* is a model program in the state. It provides workforce readiness training and a certification program with employment search, interviewing, job shadowing, and soft skill development for adults who are seeking new employment.

Las Vegas-Clark County Library District's *TechArt Studio* program introduces out-of-school learning for youth, as well as career pathways. Participants use digital technology to create content, learn how to write songs, produce videos, blog, and even learn how to DJ. This program's approach connects teens with peers, mentors, and potential employers while providing a mix of "hang out" and "geek out" time.

### Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

**Address:** 7060 W. Windmill Lane  
Las Vegas, NV, 89113-4678

**Phone:** (702) 507-6186

**Web:** [www.lvccd.org](http://www.lvccd.org)

**Executive Director:** Jeanne Goodrich

**Budget:** \$52,267,275

**Full Time Staff:** 314

**Part Time Staff:** 419

### Community Partners

AARP, casino-resort properties, Catholic Charities, area chambers of commerce, childcare centers, city of Las Vegas, Clark County, Clark County School District, College of Southern Nevada, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Cox Communications, Discovery Children's Museum, Nevada Public Radio, Nevada Small Business Development Center, Nevada Workforce Connection, senior housing, SCORE, Southern Nevada Health District, United Way of Southern Nevada, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Vegas PBS, Vegas Valley Book Festival, other local businesses, agencies and nonprofits

Opposite photo: A couple uses the library to explore starting a small business. Above left: An aspiring DJ participates in the *TechArt Studio* program. Above middle: Former ESL student Cyndi Jung finds the library to be a safe and fun place to learn with her daughter. Above right: The district's newest branch, the Windmill Library and Service Center.

# Mid-Continent Public Library

*The primary purpose of libraries in the 21st century is to build access through community and collaboration. Libraries have grown to fill the role of a “third place” outside of homes and workplaces.*

*– Steven V. Potter, Director and CEO*



## Investing in Delivery

Mid-Continent Public Library's commitment to access is reflected in its collections and digital resources budget. According to the Public Library Association, the library's expenditures on materials as a percentage of budget are the **second highest of any similarly sized library system** in the nation. The library also dedicates **more resources to digital collections** than any other library.

## Fulfilling the Needs of the Many

Mid-Continent Public Library is the largest public library system in the state of Missouri and serves a diverse mix of communities spanning three counties, urban and rural neighborhoods, and 1,349 square miles. These unique groups provide the library with the challenge and opportunity to adapt services, collections, and outreach efforts to meet the needs of each community. Despite the diverse needs, a common thread that ties the communities together is the need for access. Operating in this environment, the library continually customizes its services and invests in collections and digital resources to provide access for a widely dispersed community.

## Removing Barriers to Literacy—and Adding Fun

Mid-Continent Public Library has made early literacy a priority in its programs, aspiring to stimulate young residents' imaginations while preparing them to read at grade level. The library has offered a summer reading program for more than 40 years, with options for both readers and listeners. The latter option encourages parents to begin reading with their children at very early ages. A daycare program also allows children who spend summer in outside care to participate; in 2012, daycare participants made up 43 percent of those who completed the summer reading program.

Almost 40,000 children and teens participated in the summer reading program in 2012. Mid-Continent Public Library is currently performing a *Summer Reading Program Effectiveness Study*. Results from the pilot study showed that children who participated in the summer reading program and did nothing else grew in reading achievement during that time.

Literacy efforts at the library do not end with children. In 2012, Mid-Continent Public Library held a yearlong reading challenge for adults called *6 in 12*, encouraging adults to read six books in twelve months for a chance to win an e-reader. The contest had more than 75,000 entries and five grand-prize winners were awarded the prize. The library also partnered with a local organization, Literacy Kansas City, for a program promoting multigenerational literacy. The library offered free childcare services to parents who were functionally illiterate so they could receive training through the program. Concurrently, the children participated in literacy-based story time.



## Honoring and Connecting with Veterans

For the past 15 years, Mid-Continent Public Library has worked with regional veterans' groups to host a daylong event honoring military veterans. This provides a platform for veterans to connect and talk about shared experiences, and a chance for the community to learn about historical events and thank these heroes for their contributions. The annual *Veterans' Salute* transforms one of the branches of the library system into a military history museum. The event includes reenactments, roundtable discussions, and displays of artifacts and military equipment. The library also collects oral histories and helps connect veterans' support groups with those they serve. In 2013, more than 1,100 members of the community attended the event to celebrate their veterans.

### Mid-Continent Public Library

**Address:** 15616 E. US Hwy. 24  
Independence, MO, 64050-2747  
**Phone:** (816) 836-5200  
**Web:** [www.mymcpl.org](http://www.mymcpl.org)  
**Director and CEO:** Steven V. Potter  
**Budget:** \$41,755,305  
**Full Time Staff:** 309  
**Part Time Staff:** 686

### Community Partners

Local Investment Commission, Turn The Page KC Literacy Initiative, Women Endowing Education, National Storytelling Network, Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium, Truman Heartland Community Foundation, Mid-America Regional Council, The Writers Place, Parks and Recreation Departments of Kansas City and Platte County, Metropolitan Community Colleges, Ancestry.com, Girl Scouts, Synergy Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars USA, AARP, Family History Library, 22 public school districts, local historical societies, economic development councils, chambers of commerce

Opposite photo: Programs to stimulate young residents' imaginations.  
Above left: The annual *Veteran's Salute*. Above middle: A summer reading program at the library. Above right: Woodneath Library Center.

# Mystic Aquarium

*Guided by education, research, and exploration, we create powerful, transformative experiences that inspire learners of all ages and backgrounds to protect our oceans.*

*– Stephen M. Coan, PhD, President and CEO*



## **Taking Care of its Neighborhood**

Mystic Aquarium gives back to the community with a **direct financial impact of \$72.2 million annually**. In addition, the aquarium buys **\$5 million in services and supplies** from Connecticut businesses annually. The institution's conservation efforts protect the vitality of Long Island Sound, an important revenue-generating natural resource for Connecticut.

## **Opening and Inspiring Minds to Underwater Worlds**

Mystic Aquarium is home to one of the nation's largest outdoor beluga whale habitats and maintains a diverse collection of more than 4,000 animals, including fish, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and marine mammals. Species represented at the aquarium include beluga whales, Steller sea lions, and African penguins. Certain populations of these species are threatened or endangered in the wild. These animals serve as ambassadors to educate the public and provide conservation outreach.

Mystic Aquarium inspires people to protect our ocean planet by providing hands-on learning experiences with aquatic life from around the world. It focuses on research, education, and exploration in its on-site and outreach programs.

## **Changing Tides through STEM Education and Exploration**

Connecticut's gap between low-income and wealthier children in mathematics and reading is the largest in the country. To address this issue and provide more opportunities to underserved populations, Mystic Aquarium has developed authentic, hands-on, technology-rich science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) opportunities and training to illustrate various career pathways in STEM.

Mystic Aquarium is the largest informal science education provider in Connecticut and Southeastern New England, reaching 100,000 students annually. The Aquarium's standards-based multidisciplinary environmental education program, which includes field trips, classroom visits, and coastal field studies, provides multi-faceted learning opportunities to improve student achievement. Mystic Aquarium also engages in extensive outreach to, and inclusion of, students with special needs in all of its STEM programs.

Mystic Aquarium reaches another three million students in the United States through its *JASON Learning* division. With a suite of digital STEM curricula, the *JASON Learning* program is designed to work with museums, libraries, aquariums and zoos in boosting STEM learning and connecting informal education programs to the Common Core Curriculum. Mystic Aquarium and *JASON Learning* engage students in exploration of the global environment to teach STEM concepts. Evaluation of *JASON Learning* among broad cohorts of students shows that it has significant impact on student achievement in STEM and other subject areas.



## Making a Difference for Ocean Inhabitants

Mystic Aquarium is known for its dedicated animal care team, hands-on marine animal encounters, world-class education programs, and animal conservation and scientific research endeavors that stretch from Mystic, to the Cape of South Africa, to the High Arctic.

Locally, the *Marine Animal Rescue Program* at Mystic Aquarium rehabilitates and releases dozens of seals every year. On a more global scale, they have sent a Penguin Task Force team to South Africa to rehabilitate African penguins for release back into the wild after the population experienced a dramatic decline. And, with partner Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge, the aquarium's scientists annually collect data on hundreds of wild belugas on Cunningham Inlet in Nunavut, Canada, as part of a study aimed at protecting the health of the wild beluga whale population.

Mystic Aquarium's patrons can also take an active role in protecting the health of our oceans by participating in the institution's citizen science programs and beach cleanup events, or volunteering to assist in exhibit education, classroom support, and marine animal stranding and rehabilitation programs.

### Mystic Aquarium

**Address:** 55 Coogan Boulevard  
Mystic, CT 06355-1927

**Phone:** (860) 572-5955

**Web:** [www.mysticaquarium.org](http://www.mysticaquarium.org)

**Director:** Stephen M. Coan, PhD

**Budget:** \$16,523,251

**Full Time Staff:** 122

**Part Time Staff:** 137

### Community Partners

Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, The Feinstein Foundation, The Inner Space Center at the University of Rhode Island, Greater Mystic Visitors Bureau, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, North Slope Borough, Alaska, Ocean Exploration Trust, Stonington Public Schools, University of Connecticut, and the many other corporations, foundations, school districts, government agencies

Opposite photo: "Researcher for a Day" gives middle and high school students access to an authentic science laboratory. Above left: An educator leads students on an exploration of the marine environment. Above middle: Inupiat youth from Point Lay, Alaska participate in a beluga whale encounter program. Above right: The aquarium's main entrance.

# North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

*This is a research and education resource that illuminates the interdependence of humanity and nature. Through regional and global perspectives, we explore what we know and how we know it.*

*– Dr. Emlyn Koster, Director*



## **Commitment to Accessibility**

The museum has a full-time **curator of special populations** who is fluent in Spanish, caters to audiences with special needs and limited English proficiency, and hires contractors for language translation requirements including sign language interpretation. The museum features A/V programs with **sound and closed captions** for those with vision or hearing loss and piloted a **Low Sensory Day** for visitors with conditions triggered by sensory overload.

## **Encouraging All to Explore the Natural World**

The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is the state's most visited museum attraction and the largest institution of its type in the Southeast. With free admission to its exhibition experiences and live programs for a diverse range of people of all ages and abilities, the 315,000-square-foot museum captures the imagination of learners and enhances their understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

The museum is especially dedicated to tackling challenges in the community and igniting a passion for science, ultimately inspiring youth to seek science careers. Offsite outreach programs target underserved communities through visits to schools and organizations serving special needs populations such as at-risk youth, the visually and hearing impaired, the elderly, and terminally ill children. Staff members introduce the museum's vast resources to individuals who might not know about the wealth of knowledge and opportunity available to them. For example, the museum recently held a pioneering STEM career showcase for students with disabilities.

## **Science on Display**

The museum's new Nature Research Center (NRC) demystifies scientific research through direct access to scientists. Those from the museum, University of North Carolina System, and visiting scientists from other museums and universities conduct studies while visitors observe their research in action through floor-to-ceiling glass walls. Veterinary staff at *The Window on Animal Health* treat live animals from the museum's collection of 1,200 specimens while visitors look on and ask questions. The museum also provides an abundance of innovative opportunities for visitors of all ages, removing barriers to learning, examining natural history collections, and engaging in real-world laboratory activities.

The centerpiece of the NRC is the *SECU Daily Planet*, an immersive, three-story multimedia space that presents spectacular scenes from nature and broadcasts live programming about breaking science news on a 40-foot, high-definition screen. During these programs, science presenters discuss the research behind current issues and how it affects the daily lives of visitors.



## Up Close and Educational

The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences offers an engaging menu of informal science education experiences with hands-on exposure to the natural sciences.

*Girls in Science* and *Boys in Science* are mentorship programs that emphasize water quality issues. Participants conduct water monitoring and learn about ways to reduce pollutants, while being mentored by role models in science fields.

Each year, more than 30,000 visitors attend the museum's *BugFest*, the nation's largest, one-day, family-friendly event exploring the world of insects and arthropods. Families experience more than 100 extra exhibits, crafts, games, presentations and hands-on activities, and have the opportunity to interact with entomologists from the museum, North Carolina State University, and other scientists to hear firsthand accounts of insect exploration. Similar events dedicated to reptiles and amphibians, biotechnology, evolution, and astronomy also attract large audiences locally and from around the region.

During *Science Cafés*, weekly events at which the public can participate in science-related discussions with leaders in the field, the museum invites both in-house and guest scientists to make presentations about hot topics in science, such as research on the Appalachian Mountains and studies of the invasive lionfish. These sessions are fueled by audience participation and offer both education and entertainment. A similar teen program offers youth visitors their own café, and topics and speakers are selected by a teen advisory board.

## North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

**Address:** 11 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1029

**Phone:** (919) 707-9800

**Web:** [www.naturalsciences.org](http://www.naturalsciences.org)

**Director:** Dr. Emlyn Koster, PhD

**Budget:** \$ 18.7 million

**Full Time Staff:** 149

**Part Time Staff:** 40

## Community Partners

4H, Boys & Girls Clubs, Capitol Broadcasting, Community Workforce Solutions, Migrant Head Start, NC Herpetological Society, NC Humanities Council, NC Public Libraries, NC State Board of Education, Pitt Regional Juvenile Detention Center, Raleigh Astronomy Club, SAS Institute, St. Augustine's University, Salvation Army, Shaw University, State of North Carolina, Total Life Centers, UNC Hospital School, University of North Carolina System, Wake County Public Schools, Wake Tech Adult Education, WUNC-FM/WUNC-TV, YMCA

Opposite photo: Paleontology & Geology Lab Director Dr. Lindsay Zanno shows off a trio of fossils, photo by Matt Zeher. Above left: The launch of NASA's MAVEN mission was broadcast live from the museum on Nov 18 2013, photo by Matt Zeher. Above middle: *Girls in Science* is an afterschool program that offers hands-on science experiences, photo by Lisa Schell.



# Octavia Fellin Public Library

*As a library, we are a source of public information for our patrons, not only within our walls but also out in the community, as a partner.*

*– Mary Ellen Pellington, Director*



## Rapid User Growth

Octavia Fellin Public Library has grown considerably in recent years. From 2009 to 2012:

- Patronage increased from 91,867 visits to 221,001
- Number of adult-focused programs grew from 2 to 103
- Reference interactions went from none reported in 2009 to 2,925 in 2012
- Public computer use grew by 10,000 users

## A Bastion for Free Access in the Region

Octavia Fellin Public Library is funded by a city of 20,000 residents, but services a county of 73,000 people—75.5 percent are Native American. Located in Gallup, New Mexico, it is the only public library for the City of Gallup, McKinley County, and the Southeast District of the Navajo Nation.

The library consists of two buildings, an adult facility and a children's facility, which both host regular events, classes, and workshops that are free to the public. These include free early literacy programming, school-aged programming, art exhibits and artist receptions, Native American history speakers, cultural film screenings, Navajo weaving, poetry contests, filmmaking classes, and many other programs. Taking on the responsibility of protecting the cultural heritage of the region, Octavia Fellin Public Library maintains one of the largest acquisitions of Works Progress Administration era art in the Southwest, hosts archives of inter-tribal Indian ceremonial history, and has amassed one of the largest Southwest collections in the country, including extensive research focusing on the Four Corners area.

## Connecting a Unique Patron Base

Many of the visitors to the Octavia Fellin Library live on the Navajo Nation, Hopi Reservation, and the Zuni Pueblo where there is limited Internet access and few computers. The library has substantially increased the number of public computers it provides to meet the needs of the community. Through its comprehensive free computer training program taught in English and Navajo, the library has been able to tailor classes to meet the needs of McKinley County's population.

In addition to enhancing computer literacy, the library offers a wide variety of cultural and informational programs exposing the community members, many whom do not leave the county or the state, to the heritage of others and broadening their world view. The library celebrates the county's diversity including Native American, Hispanic, Japanese, and Palestinian populations through its collection and programs such as author visits, musical and dance performances, lectures, art exhibits, and special events. The library supports contemporary Native American studies through both children's and adult programs, including Zuni art, pottery, and culture, Hopi drumming



and traditions, Navajo weaving classes, jewelry making, history, and events such as *Navajo Code Talkers* discussing their experiences during World War II. The library has just launched a Navajo Language Learning Center featuring print materials and a computer station with Navajo language software.

### Driving Economic Change

Within Octavia Fellin Public Library's service area, 36 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 50 percent are unemployed. To help uplift this community, the library offers business and computer training and maintains updated business and business reference collections in an effort to provide the tools and skills to empower visitors to become more productive and self-sufficient. It also partnered with the local Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Association, and the University of New Mexico-Gallup campus to bring job training and marketing workshops to the library.

Working with these business groups, the library determined that most of the residents in the region derived their incomes from selling Native American arts and crafts. To enhance these skills for local residents, the library's programming now includes makerspace workshops on weaving, soap making, quilting, candle making, aromatherapy, knitting, card making, and silversmith training.

### Octavia Fellin Public Library

**Address:** 115 West Hill Avenue  
Gallup, NM 87301-6217

**Phone:** (505) 863-1291

**Web:** [www.galluplibrary.org](http://www.galluplibrary.org)

**Director:** Mary Ellen Pellington

**Budget:** \$772,849

**Full Time Staff:** 12

**Part Time Staff:** 6

### Community Partners

McKinley County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Intertribal Ceremonial, Code Talkers Association, Crownpoint Historical Commission, GallupArts, UNM-Gallup Branch, Boys and Girls Club of Gallup, Gallup-McKinley County School District, Battered Women's Shelter, FACES, Plateau Sciences Society, Gallup Head Start, Navajo Nation Workforce, National Indian Youth Council, Navajo Nation Office of Youth Development, McKinley County Recycling Committee, Gallup Film Foundation, McKinley County NAACP

Opposite photo: Navajo artist Jerry Brown gives a demonstration for Native American Heritage Month. Above left: Navajo weaver Lois Becenti provides hands-on instruction. Above middle: Father and son use a library computer. Above right: The library's mural, painted by Geddy Epaloose, depicts the story of the Zunis bringing their traditions, culture, and history into Gallup.

# Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

*Our museum portrays the history of life and the evolution of cultures. It helps people to understand how complex the world is and how they fit into it.*

*– Michael A. Mares, Director*



## **A Previous National Honor** **The museum received the Award** **for Outstanding Commitment to the** **Preservation and Care of Collections**

from Heritage Preservation and the American Institute for Conservation and Artistic Works in 2004. This honor was shared with the National Archives, which had finished conserving the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

## **Source of Oklahoma Pride**

The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History began building collections on the campus of what is now the University of Oklahoma in 1899, when Oklahoma was still a new U.S. territory. The museum now hosts more than 10 million objects organized into 12 collections. In 2000, the museum moved into a brand new, 198,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility on a 40-acre campus site, a dramatic upgrade from the barns and stables that first housed the collections.

The new building helped to alleviate community concerns over the collections' vulnerability to the region's tornadoes, prairie fires, severe storms and other catastrophes—in the early 1900s, collections were lost twice due to fires. Beloved throughout the state, the museum's premiere exhibits and programs reflect the biological, cultural, paleontological, and selected geological history of Oklahoma. The effort to raise money for the new facility was spearheaded by the people of the host town Norman, as well as other residents of the state of Oklahoma. Each year, the annual visits to the museum exceed the population of Norman by 50 percent.

## **Offering Authentic Science Experiences**

To improve science education learning experiences available to Oklahoma youth and teachers, The Sam Noble Museum implemented a program called *ExplorOlogy*, which engages participants at the sixth grade level through high school by partnering students with museum scientists to create the unique opportunity to witness real science. *ExplorOlogy* organizes summer field expeditions for students to travel to real paleontology sites, conducts outreach visits to schools, and hosts teacher professional development workshops.

Of the over 54,000 total participants in *ExplorOlogy* since 2007, more than half have been female, a typically underrepresented group in science careers. Additionally, 83 percent of past participating students currently attend a university. These include two Gates Millennium Scholarship winners and a significant number who are pursuing degrees in science fields.



## Returning Languages to the People

The Sam Noble Museum is one of the few museums that have a language collection, and it focuses heavily on Native American languages. Many of these languages have few fluent speakers alive today. The museum made a long-term commitment to help revitalize languages in contemporary Native American communities, many from the state of Oklahoma, through partnerships and programs that encourage daily use of Native languages. A curator of Native American Languages at the museum works with Native communities and researchers to care for indigenous language collections and make them accessible to the public.

*Oklahoma Breath of Life, Silent No More Workshops*, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, are weeklong, intensive training classes in linguistics and language renewal. These workshops are designed for indigenous people from communities who no longer have fluent, first-language speakers. The museum's outreach program also engages with children to encourage reading in Native languages. More than 30 Native American languages have been offered for study, and 2,000 participants have come to the museum from all over Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, and beyond. As a result of these efforts, many tribal elders were able to speak with grandchildren in their native languages for the first time.

## Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

**Address:** 2401 Chautauqua Avenue  
Norman, OK 73072-7029

**Phone:** (405) 325-4712

**Web:** [www.samnoblemuseum.org](http://www.samnoblemuseum.org)

**Director:** Michael A. Mares

**Budget:** \$5,000,000

**Full Time Staff:** 75

**Part Time Staff:** 40

## Community Partners

The University of Oklahoma, The Noble Foundation, The Whitten-Newman Foundation, The Bilby Foundation, The Boeing Charitable Trust, The Cyril Fund and The Walton Family Foundation. Native American Tribal Nations, The Pioneer Library System, The Norman Arts Council, Native Explorers, The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The Jacobson Foundation, The Oklahoma Museums Association, public schools across the state

Opposite photo: The annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair inspires interest in Native languages. Above left: Visitors bring objects for identification during *Science in Action & Object I.D. Day*, photo by Alexandria Reynolds Photography. Above middle: The museum offers exceptional presentations throughout the year at no cost to visitors. Above right: The museum, located on the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus, photo by Welch Creative.

# Yiddish Book Center

*Saving books is an important goal, but putting them into the hands of new readers and making them accessible to the broadest possible community is an even more important one.*

*– Aaron Lansky, Founder and President*



## Offering Community Activities, Experiences, and Understanding

Yiddish Book Center offers a wide range of exhibits and public programs to introduce and celebrate Jewish culture. **Yidstock**, a four-day festival of new Yiddish music, presents concerts, plays, dance workshops, and cultural lectures. The center also hosts **traveling exhibits, free film screenings, tours and community activities for all ages.**

## Saving the Literature

Yiddish Book Center is a nonprofit organization that rescues, translates, and disseminates Yiddish books and presents innovative educational programs to broaden understanding of modern Jewish identity. When the center began this work almost 35 years ago, a vast quantity of Yiddish literature was on the brink of extinction, often discarded by American-born Jews who were unable to read the language of their Yiddish-speaking parents and grandparents.

The nationwide effort has since recovered more than one million volumes—some brought to the center by their original owners, and others rescued from basements, demolition sites, and dumpsters. The center has also rescued books from all over the world, including Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Australia. Even now, it continues to receive thousands of additional volumes each year.

## Transforming Possibilities through Innovation

Yiddish Book Center's staff could not have predicted that, years after its beginnings, technological advances could take them so far beyond physically saving the books to making their content available on-demand to anyone in the world. This is what happened: In 1997 the Center took a giant step forward with the establishment of the Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library. In 2009 they placed the first 11,000 digitized titles online. Working with the Internet Archive, the titles were posted where they can be accessed and downloaded free of charge. They've since been downloaded more than 500,000 times.

Another breakthrough came from a computational linguist and software developer who developed a Yiddish optical character recognition program that could be used to convert image files into searchable text for the first time. The center is working to make its entire online library searchable. Students, scholars, and interested readers will be able to type in any search term to scan millions of pages of Yiddish literature, something that will transform Yiddish scholarship.

Over the past ten years the Center has co-published ten translations through its *New Yiddish Library* series at Yale University. Because only two percent of Yiddish literature had English translations, the Yiddish Book Center created a new website,



www.tavtsh.org, as a resource for Yiddish translators to provide crucial bibliographic, lexical, and editorial tools. The center also created a Translation Fellowship Program for aspiring translators to support and mentor a new generation of Yiddish translators. Another program will facilitate the publication of Yiddish translations in both print and e-books.

### Inviting a New Generation to Explore

Yiddish Book Center hosts students of all ages in a range of education programs to introduce them to works and culture. High school students study with professors, meet contemporary authors, and connect with other teens while immersing themselves in Jewish literature during the *Great Jewish Books Summer Program*. A seven-week summer program, *Steiner Summer Yiddish Program* is also available for college students to gain Yiddish language literacy, study central and eastern European Jewish history and culture, and participate in Yiddish cultural preservation and production. *TTent: Encounters with Jewish Culture* is a series of one-week seminars for recent college graduates ages 21 to 30 who are curious about the connections between “Jewishness” and modern culture.

Through the fellowship program, fellows spend a year as full-time staff members, learning valuable skills and participating in a dynamic environment of Yiddish cultural production and preservation. These educational programs are not limited to Jews or Yiddish readers. Participants come from all over the world and from different backgrounds, to explore the centuries-old Yiddish culture and language.

### Yiddish Book Center

**Address:** 1021 West Street

Amherst, MA 01002-3375

**Phone:** (413) 256-4900

**Web:** [www.yiddishbookcenter.org](http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org)

**Founder and President:** Aaron Lansky

**Budget:** \$5,528,767

**Full Time Staff:** 26

**Part Time Staff:** 4

### Community Partners

Internet Archive, Hampshire College, Jewish Public Library, The National Library of Israel, Righteous Persons Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Five Colleges, Inc.

Opposite photo: Teacher and students looking at a selection of sheet music.

Above left: One of the center’s permanent exhibits, *Yiddish Print Shop*.

Above middle: Students visit as part of the center’s *Field Trip Program*, photos by Ben Barnhart. Above right: The center’s architecturally distinctive “shtetl,” building.

# National Medal Finalists

This year, 30 institutions were named finalists for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Diverse institutions including an urban art museum, small town local library, children's museums, regional library systems, community gardens, and more, from Washington to Georgia, Arizona to Connecticut, were among the honorees. Seven finalists participate in the *Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* initiative. Through the *Share Your Story* initiative, thousands of community members highlighted ways finalist institutions impacted and changed their lives for the better.

Congratulations to the 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service finalists.

Amazement Square, Lynchburg, Virginia\*  
Athens-Clarke County Library, Athens, Georgia  
Bertha Voyer Memorial Library, Honey Grove, Texas  
Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois  
Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania\*  
Cecil County Public Library, Elkton, Maryland  
The Children's Museum at La Habra, La Habra, California  
Children's Museum of Tacoma, Tacoma, Washington\*  
Hartford Public Library, Hartford, Connecticut  
Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, California  
Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut\*  
National Veterans Art Museum, Chicago, Illinois  
Otis Library, Norwich, Connecticut  
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago, Illinois\*  
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania\*  
Pima County Public Library, Tucson, Arizona  
Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento, California  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, New York  
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington  
Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, Seattle, Washington\*

\* *Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* participants.  
Visit [www.ims.gov/letsmove](http://www.ims.gov/letsmove) to learn more  
about this initiative.



# 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 presidentially appointed 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.

## Board Chairperson

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# About the National Medal

Since 1994, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service has honored 142 outstanding institutions that have made significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Selected institutions demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The winners are selected by the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in consultation with the National Museum and Library Services Board. Winners are honored at a National Medal award ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

Beginning with the 2009 awardees, personal stories demonstrating the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions are being documented through a cooperative agreement between IMLS and StoryCorps, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



# About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.





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