Building a Museum Community Around Museums for All

ACM InterActivity Denver – May 10, 2019
Our Speakers

• Sean Joyce – President and Executive Director, Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens
• Rachel McKay – Accessibility and Inclusion Manager, Grand Rapids Children’s Museum
• Wendy Taylor – Executive Director, San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum
• Sandra Narva – Senior Program Officer, Office of Museum Services, IMLS
• Brendan Cartwright – Program Manager, Special Initiatives, ACM
The Museums for All (MFA) initiative launched May 2014. It is a joint initiative from the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM) and the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS). The guiding idea was that every family deserves access to a high quality museum experience.

MFA launched as a pilot initially focusing on children’s museums. Word spread around the country, and institutions outside of the children’s space have joined in.
Several regional and citywide access programs existed, and most museums offered a monthly free night.

MFA was a national program, along the lines of Blue Star Museums, but it was available year-round, any day. It gave agency to the visitors.

SNAP EBT cards were chosen as a quick, easy, nationally available way of demonstrating qualification for the program.
Museums for All is meaningful because it:

1. models respect for all visitors
2. confirms museums as civic resources
3. raises the visibility of the field
4. provides a new program to support museum operations
Increase Public Access

Goal 3: Increase Public Access

81% of people in the U.S. have visited a public library or bookmobile.

IMLS makes strategic investments that increase access to information, ideas, and networks through libraries and museums.

Libraries and museums are trusted stewards of our nation’s knowledge and collections. They care for, conserve, manage, and provide access to information that represents the cultural, artistic, historical, natural, and scientific foundations of our shared heritage.

Increasingly, museums and libraries are making their resources more accessible for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. This includes widespread programs and services to accommodate the one in six people in America who have a disability.

Through their programs and services, these institutions are building cultural, economic, and geographic connections, helping contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.

Providing broad access continues to be a vital service of our nation’s public libraries. Access to the internet, as well as related training, helps community members find new jobs, succeed in school, and obtain essential government services.

With IMLS support, museums and libraries are increasingly digitizing their collections, building their online presence, and opening doors for visitors, users, students, and scholars, wherever they may be.

By encouraging shared systems, networks, staff training, and open-source technologies, IMLS will help fulfill a vision of making library and museum resources more accessible for all.

Objectives

1. Support the stewardship of museum and library collections at institutions of all types and sizes.
2. Invest in tools, technology, and training that enable people of all backgrounds and abilities to discover and use museum and library collections and resources.
3. Invest in policies and partnerships that address barriers to accessing museum and library collections, programs, and information.
4. Increase access to IMLS, museum, library, and community knowledge through effective communications.

People visited America’s public libraries more than 1.3 billion times in 2015.

Spotlight

Over the past two decades, IMLS has focused on developing, providing access to, and improving digital library tools, content, services, and infrastructures through competitive grants and its Grants to States program.

A component of the Library Services and Technology Act, IMLS Grants to States annually provides population-based grants to each state’s library administrative agency. From 2002 to 2011, the Grants to States program supplied $980 million to support increased access to digital information, including $67 million to fund the digitization of local history and special collections.
Growth of Museums for All

As of 4/29/2019

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>49,331</td>
<td>282,822</td>
<td>872,098</td>
<td>1,481,261</td>
<td>1,886,966</td>
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*As of 4/29/2019

Institute of Museum and Library Services
Expanded Efforts to Increase Accessibility

* As of 4/29/2019 - 46 states, plus DC and US Virgin Islands

Institute of Museum and Library Services
Basic Guidelines

• Register to participate in Museums for All (www.museums4all.org).
• Offer individual admission fees ranging from free to $3.00 (USD) to individuals and families presenting a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, and a valid form of photo ID. Museums for All admission rates must be offered for up to four individuals per EBT card. This admission rate must be available during all normal operating hours.
• Clearly publicize participation in Museums for All by posting information about access on their websites and other collateral.
• Use the approved Museums for All PR toolkit resources for branding of the program in all communications.
• Train sales and front line staff appropriately to ensure good customer service to individuals and families seeking to take advantage of the Museums for All program.
Reporting

• Regularly report the number of visitors who utilize Museums for All admission.
  • Reporting is done on a quarterly basis
  • Share total attendance and Museums for All attendance for that quarter (most museums see usage under 3%)
  • Share any stories, testimonials, feedback, or criticisms
  • Reminders are sent
Why did your museums decide to offer an access program like Museums for All in the first place?
Launched all media and programming July 1, 2018 as a group
Over 1,400 visits on initial launch
Metro buses wrapped 50 buses
Foundation support building
Leading other collaboration initiatives (social services – food banks)
VALUE – Our community needs this!

When “good” isn’t good enough

- What messages were we sending by only offering one discounted night a week?
  - How many hoops were we asking families to jump through?
  - Who were we missing because of this?
- Statewide cuts to EBT benefits → include WIC as well
  - Wider range of families served!
San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum

Why Museums for All?

• Geographic Location
• Direct correlation between income level and test scores
• Access for All
  o Admission Fund
  o Scholarship Fund
  o Membership Fund

Statewide, students who met or exceeded California state standards

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Math</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
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How many of San Diego County’s 42 school districts came in below the state average?

21 Math
15 English
THE NEED

66% of San Diego’s elementary-age children are socioeconomically disadvantaged

68% of San Diego County elementary schools are low-income (classified as Title-I)

No parent should have to choose between feeding their children and providing quality education

PROVIDING ACCESS FOR ALL

5,546 Low-income patrons received subsidized $1 admission

14,103 Military family members received free admission

7,521 Low-income students and adults received scholarships

17 San Diego County school districts were served

493 Low-income preschool families received free memberships
PARTNERSHIPS

What other museums in your community are offering Museums for All, and what sort of cooperation or collaboration you have with them?
Metro produced and distributed brochures free of charge for the collaboration

Collaboration with 3 county metro transit authorities

Offered free rates for same qualified riders for July and August. $.50 rides thereafter if headed to museums / attractions

Transit authorities promoting Museums for All program and other programs of organizations involved in collaboration.
PARTNERSHIPS – Becoming a Hub City

Funding Partnerships
• Underwriting allowed us to launch, thank you Wege Foundation! This gave us the start we needed for the program to grow roots.

Gaining city-wide momentum
• Our neighbors, the GRAM and the UICA, joined Museums for All in 2018, helping to grow our city’s culture of accessibility
• Collaborative energy, shared resources

Look for us at the AMM-MMA Conference in October!
PARTNERSHIPS – Building strong bonds

Museums for All is about building TRUST with community.

• Outreach: Research-driven neighborhood engagement
• Community perceptions of safety, mobility, and other barriers: meet families where they are
• Think outside the box, where is EBT/WIC relevant? (Hint: it’s everywhere)
San Diego Museums for All Collaborative

Original Partners

- Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego
- Museum of Making Music
- New Children’s Museum
- SD Children’s Discovery Museum
- SD History Center
- SD Natural History Museum

Additional Partners

- Barona Cultural Center & Museum
- Birch Aquarium
- SD Archaeological Center
- SD Art Institute
- CA Center for the Arts
- SD Museum of Art
- SD Museum Council
San Diego Museums for All Collaborative
Cosigned Press Release Results

Voice of San Diego | Culture Report | May 29, 2018  Click Here for Article

SD museums offer free or reduced price access for low income visitors | CBS News 8 | May 29, 2018  Click Here for Segment

Free or Cheap Admission Available to 6 Local Museums for EBT Card Holders | NBC 7 San Diego | May 30, 2018  Click Here for Segment

6 museums offer free or discounted entry to low-income visitors | FOX 5 San Diego | May 29, 2018  Click Here for Segment

Museums Offer Free Or Reduced-Price Access For Low-Income Visitors | KPBS | May 30, 2018  Click Here for Article

Low-Income Families to Receive Free, Discounted Admission at San Diego Museums | Times of San Diego | May 29, 2018  Click Here for Article

Program Offers Free or Cheap Museum Admission | Topix | May 30, 2018  Click Here for Article

San Diego Union Tribune  Click Here for Article
SCALABILITY

How can other cities adopt or adapt what is working successfully in your city?
SCALABILITY - Program Reach is growing!

Over 330 Zip codes served!

Where are visitors coming from?

- Majority in West Michigan
  - Strategic Kent County outreach
  - Helpful in identifying potential outreach areas
SCALABILITY – The value of surveys

- Optional but encouraged
- Qualitative emphasis, sensitivity to how questions are asked
- Write-in options

Thank you for participating in the Museums for All program at the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum! The information you provide in the following survey will help us to secure funding to keep this program running for years to come, thank you for supporting us!

Zipcode: 49501

Have you visited the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum before today? □ Yes □ No
- Weekly
- Monthly
- 6-10 times yearly
- 1-5 times yearly
- Once yearly

Have your children ever visited the Museum on a field trip before? □ Yes □ No □ Not Sure

How many are in your group?
- Children (age 1-17) □ □ Infants (Under 1)
- Adults (age 18-64) □ □ Seniors (Over 64)

How did you get here today?
□ By car □ By rideshare
□ By bus □ On foot
□ By bicycle □ Other ___________

How did you hear about this program?

Where do you receive most of your information about community events and programs?

How would you rate your experience here today?
□ Somewhat Negative □ 3=Good □ 4=Very Good □ 5=Excellent

How would you rate your interactions with our staff today?
□ Somewhat Negative □ 3=Good □ 4=Very Good □ 5=Excellent

How likely would you be to return?
□ 1=Very Unlikely □ 2=Unlikely □ 3=Unsure □ 4=Likely □ 5=Very Likely

What was your child’s favorite part of their visit today?

Please share any other thoughts/comments/suggestions you’d like to pass along:

THANK YOU so much for helping us build a better museum experience!
San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum

Successes

• Collaboration
• Cosigned Press Release

Challenges

• How to communicate different discounts
• Including free museums
• Time and Resources
SAN DIEGO CHILDREN’S DISCOVERY MUSEUM
ACCESS FOR ALL
San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum’s “Access for All” initiative
is part of the Museum’s mission to make the Museum accessible to
all, removing any financial or physical barriers to attend and receive
access to hands-on, early childhood education in science, art, and
world culture activities.

WAYS TO SAVE

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card - $1 discounted admission
Active-Duty Military & Veteran Families - $5 discounted admission
Preschool & Elementary Educator Families Discount - $5 discounted admission
Escondido & Vista Library Public Membership - free membership available
for check out
Escondido School District Elementary Students & Families Public
Membership - free membership available for check out
Escondido School District Preschool Students & Families Membership -
free membership
Grandparent Discounted Membership - $75 discounted membership
Special Needs Discounted Membership - $75 discounted membership
Palomar Health L.E.A.P. Program Membership - free membership
Escondido Child Development Center (ECCDC) Membership - free membership
WIC Families Discount - (2) free admission passes given at annual recertification
San Diego County Summer Reading Program Discount - (1) free admission
pass to all 2019 participants

> Visit SDCDM.org to learn more

Family Access Membership $35
Reduced cost admission for families that qualify as
participants in one of the following programs:
California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP)
California Coverage & Health Initiatives (CCHI)
California State Preschool Program (CSPP)
Cal-SAFE
CalWORKS Stage 2 Child Care (C2AP)
CalWORKS Stage 3 Child Care (C3AP)
Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR)
Food Stamps / CALFresh Program / Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program
Free and Reduced School Lunch
Head Start / Early Head Start
Healthy Families / Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
Licensed Foster Parent
Low-Income Energy Assistance / Low-Income Home Energy
Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
Medicaid / Medi-Cal
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Section 8 / Public Housing
Women Infants and Children (WIC)

> To apply, visit SDCDM.org

(760) 233-7755 • 320 North Broadway, Escondido, CA 92025 • SDCDM.ORG
Some museums might be hesitant to implement Museums for All. Did you experience any pushback from your museum or community?
FEARLESS - How has attendance changed?

What does this mean for us?

- Nearly 12,000 first time guests thanks to M4A
- Chance to become regular attendees
- More comfortable Family Night attendance
- Higher weekend attendance
- Stronger community trust

26,940 M4A guests total

44.1% never previously visited
25.4% only visited once a year
FEARLESS – Dealing with pushback

Reframing the conversation

• It’s AND not OR
• Myth-busting EBT usage stereotypes
• Normalizing SNAP/EBT/WIC through exhibits
• Front desk training
“Thank you so much! This program made it possible for us to come today!”

“I am currently unemployed and greatly appreciate this program so my children can enjoy a fun friendly learning environment without technology that is offered at a low cost. Thank you!”

“Thank you for having the EBT program, we couldn't afford to come without it.”

“We were deciding if we could afford our visit today, when I heard about the Museums for All program. So wonderful.”

“What a great program! We're foster parents with 7 kids and cost is a reason we don't come but not anymore!”

“This program is amazing! It gave us a chance to show my daughter a fun time that was affordable on my single parent income. Thank you!”
Learning is a RIGHT, not a PRIVILEGE
Why others should join Museums for All?
Resources

- Toolkit
- Webinars
- Online hangouts
- Groupsite
- Your peers, especially if you are in a Hub City
How to Register

• www.Museums4All.org

• Any questions?
  brendan.cartwright@childrensmuseums.org