Strategic growth is a marathon, not a sprint.
“Gensler is America’s foremost collaborative practice. The firm exemplifies how the creative mix of disciplines, all with ‘place’ as their focus, adds richness and value to buildings and their settings.”

—MICHAEL J. STANTON, FAIA, PRESIDENT EMERITUS, AIA

Design Excellence

Gensler creates great places that meet and amplify our clients’ expectations and are sensitive neighbors in their communities. In all our work, we aim for authenticity and an organic relationship between concepts and uses. At the same time, we believe in the delight of the unexpected and the sophisticated.

At Gensler, good design is less a question of style than of realistic and appropriate response to project needs. We collaborate fully with clients and consultants throughout the design process and understand that experience is always necessary to underwrite innovation. For us, excellence can take any form as long as it’s something the project’s constituents are proud of.
Focused on Mission Oriented Cultural Clients

Gensler puts institutional mission at the heart of our work for cultural clients.

From world-class libraries to locally-oriented resources, all our projects begin by collaborating with our clients to understand their goals and the constituencies they serve. Our ambition is always to envision the ideal environment in which our clients can communicate, create, display, and interact.

At the same time, we respect the importance of shared spaces where institutional missions intersect with public life. Gensler has a strong track record in design and delivery of such buildings, including their often complex technical requirements. Our success can be measured by the enhanced vitality of the institutions we have partnered with and their positive impact on communities and visitor constituencies.

Stakeholder Engagement is Essential

Civic and cultural nonprofit organizations have even more at stake.

They have to address the needs of a long and varied list of stakeholders with often different agendas and viewpoints. In addition to board members, donors, patrons, and staff, these are often governmental agencies and policy makers, artists, and the community at large. In addition, civic and cultural projects are almost always very visible, inviting, and necessitating extensive solicited and unsolicited input and a real impetus for contextual design.

Gensler is very good at navigating these waters. We have extensive experience in planning and facilitating stakeholder sessions, strategic board retreats, town halls, and community meetings to secure broad feedback and input and build consensus for moving forward. With the talent of more than 1,200 professionals across the globe, Gensler has the experience and expertise to understand and design the many different types of specialty spaces often housed within these very special projects.
It is a long race, not a sprint

Our DNA at Gensler has always been focused on building long term client relationships, rather than projects.

This is one of Alt’s Gensler’s founding principles for our firm—it means we are here for the long haul. We understand that with non-profit organizations, every dollar you spend has to be raised and capital expenditures require consensus and often long-term planning. We are fully aware of the ebbs and flows in raising capital and commit to being by your side to plan and build consensus for your dream projects and handle whatever you may need in between.

This partnership means you have our pledge to use our vast resources and relationships to connect our clients to other resources and partnerships to potentially amplify their impact. We do this because we know that our greatest projects at Gensler come from our greatest client partnerships.
Research: The Future of Museums

Museums have the power to excite, educate, and enlighten but as the 21st Century progresses, unique challenges and opportunities for their success are emerging, and redefining the way they operate and thrive. Shifts in visitor demographics, evolving visitor preferences for how to experience and enjoy museums are being met with an increased recognition of the need for museums to innovate and expand their roles in the community. Recognizing the importance of museums as social and cultural institutions, the research team explored how museums in their communities are using the power of technology to create more dynamic, memorable experiences for visitors that foster audience loyalty and repeat visits.

Museum programs, once entirely formally-structured objects centered around objects, are expanding to include informally-structured story-centered activities, engaging audiences in the history and culture of their communities. At the center of this process, we found museums are innovatively engaging audiences to create greater excitement, relevance, and operational sustainability. Through interviews with museum leaders and innovators in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, London, and Costa Rica, the research team explored how museums are using technology to enhance the visitor experience, engage with communities, and provide a more inclusive and dynamic role for museums in the community.

Building on a research program launched in 2014, this study has been studying how museums are innovatively engaging audiences to create greater excitement, relevance, and operational sustainability. Through interviews with museum leaders and innovators in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, London, and Costa Rica, the research team explored how museums in their communities are using technology to create more dynamic, memorable experiences for visitors that foster audience loyalty and repeat visits.

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Key Findings

Visitor Expectations

Museums face a contradiction of expectations—visitors expect technology to enhance the visitor experience, but also see value in a more personal, reflective, and contemplative experience. In 2016, the research team explored how museums in their communities are using technology to enhance the visitor experience, engage with communities, and provide a more inclusive and dynamic role for museums in the community.

Inclusion

Museums are more than just places to see art; they are places that provide a unique and enriching experience for all. Studies have shown that museums can provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. As museums continue to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of their communities, it is important to ensure that everyone has access to this enriching and rewarding experience.

Read more: [Link to article]
Gensler Project Examples:

- **Marbles**: Master Plan, ImagiFab, Admin Office Relocation
- **Kidzu**: Southern Village, University Place, The Nest
- **Kaleideum**: New 70K SF museum
- **NCMNS**: Dino Lab and Entry Experience renovations
Gensler Services Examples:
Visioning, Master Planning, Programming, Space Planning (Test-Fits), Architecture & Interior Design, Exhibit Design, Digital Experience Design
Gensler Tools, Examples:
Firmwide research, visioning toolkit, programming questionnaires and worksheets, focus groups & surveys, schedule frameworks, budget worksheets, user mapping
Melanie Hatz Levinson
CCO, Kidzu Children’s Museum

Sally Edwards
CEO, Marbles Kids Museum
Vision & Goal Setting
Our Mission

Marbles sparks imagination, discovery and learning through PLAY.

Why?

Play is how children learn best.  
Play strengthens families.  
Play connects communities.  
Play makes us happy.
Marbles is among NC’s top family destinations 704,000+ people annually pre-pandemic.

#6 most visited attraction in NC

#1 in visitors/square foot
Visitation Exceeds Capacity.

Need to relieve congestion.
Operating Over Capacity Compromises our WHY.
Learning, Play, Connection, Happiness.
WE NEED MORE SPACE FOR PLAY
FRANKLIN STREET

Kidzu’s first two locations served more than 220,000 visitors from 2006 to 2013

UNIVERSITY PLACE

- Annual Attendance (pre-pandemic): 65,000 onsite + 5,000+ offsite outreach
- Average # of Active Memberships: 870+

Launch Pad I - 2014
Launch Pad II - 2015

BUILDING ON SUCCESS
A MUSEUM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
- A MUSEUM FOR ALL

Our Mission:
With focus on STEM, the arts, health + wellness and emerging literacy, Kidzu inspires children and the adults in their lives to learn through creative and purposeful play.

Our Vision:
To be an innovator in informal learning and a model of excellence as a “community-centered” children’s museum - that is to serve, celebrate and reflect the uniqueness of our region through developmentally appropriate exhibits and programs for children and the adults who care for them.

Core Values:
creativity, collaboration, community, sustainability, play as lifelong learning, research + best practices
We Built a Museum!
Opening date April 11, 2015

We Won Awards!
Silver, Best Museum
Gold, Best Place to Host a Birthday Party

“We love Kidzu! Our daughter, now a preschooler, asks to come here almost every week. It was nice even when it was in a tiny space in the mall, but now that it’s in a bigger area, it’s so much better. There are multiple stations for kids to explore, including craft areas, science areas, and many different imagination areas.”
—TripAdvisor Reviewer

We Got Awesome Reviews!

“I went with my cousins because it was a rainy day and once we entered they did not want to leave. There are tons of activities for children to do and lots of imaginative play. It was clean and had a lovely staff.”
—Yelp Reviewer
Kidzu's Community Impact

**Inside Our Walls**
- Kidzu hosts **MONTHLY** no-cost programs
- Kidzu provides **DAILY** programs at no cost with museum admission
- Kidzu serves **70,000 visitors ANNUALLY**
- Early opening for kids with medical issues (compromised immune systems)
- Virtual Museum of online learning spaces

**Multilingual programs and resources**
- Free memberships for social service agencies
- Open late for Adaptive Playdates

**Beyond Our Walls**
- Kidzu serves more than 4,000 kids through community events
- Kidzu brings STEM learning to schools and community centers
- Kidzu collaborates with 100+ academic & community partners
Kidzu hopes to move and expand with the help of the Town of Chapel Hill
MUSEUMS ARE CATALYSTS FOR THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Children’s museums are the fastest growing segment of the museum industry.

- 341 Children’s Museum members of the ACM
- $440M Spent by children’s museums each year
- 22 Countries represented in ACM
- 35M Visitors welcomed by children’s museums each year
- 5M People served through children’s museums’ outreach each year
- 35% of children’s museums are flagships in downtown areas
Imagine...
The new Kidzu Children’s Museum
LISTENING SESSIONS
Saturday, July 21 9–11:00 a.m.
Wednesday, July 25 6–8:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 5 12–2:00 p.m.
Share your ideas with the Executive Director.
Imagine Kidzu’s future in Southern Village.
Refreshments will be provided, along with supervised play by Kidzu staff.
RSVP online
www.kidzuchildrensmuseum.org
Training
The Reggio Emilia Approach and the Culture of the Atelier

ORARIO DI APERTURA
LUN-VEN 8.30/12.45 13.30/17.30
SAB 8.30/12.45 14.00/16.00
DOMENICA E GIORNI DI POMERIGGI CHURO

Group of people posing for a picture in an exhibition space.

Individuals standing and kneeling in front of a orange wall.

Individuals working with materials.

Color samples displayed in a row.

Person sitting on a triangular structure.
“It is of particular significance that an early educational intervention produced long-term health effects,” said FPG senior scientist emeritus Joseph Sparling, when FPG released last year’s groundbreaking findings. Sparling, co-creator of the Abecedarian Approach, and colleagues have applied updated versions of it in several countries.
Kidzu’s Early Learning Initiative

Like the former NC statewide More at Four pre-Kindergarten initiative (now NC Pre-K) designed to provide high quality education programs for at-risk 4 year olds, Kidzu’s More Before initiative aims to raise awareness, and address opportunity gaps by prioritizing focus on the foundational brain development that takes place from birth to 3 years through accessible programming at The Nest and extensive community outreach and advocacy.
GREATEST NEEDS

#1
- Age-specific educational resources and school preparation

#3
- Opportunities for social connection and community among caregivers
- Opportunities to build parent-child connection

#5
- Structured and unstructured play

#2
- Affordable learning opportunities

#4
- Access to non-English/bilingual educational opportunities/services
- Safe and creative physical environment
- Online resources

ACTION ITEMS

Provide caregiver-specific training, resources, and support
Create a safe, welcoming, and accessible environment for all communities
Encourage caregiver involvement and self-efficacy
Provide opportunities for social interaction and support among caregivers
Reach out to underrepresented families (getting a van, advertise in affordable housing communities, etc.)
Offer bilingual services/opportunities
Maintain online resources post-pandemic
Include caregiver involvement and input
Offer multiple, routine events
Create more free/affordable opportunities
Trained ECE staff
Guided play
Healthy attachment activities
Integrate outdoor space/play

Action items describe, as suggested by our participants, how The Nest can better meet the needs of infants and their caregivers as we transition into our physical museum space.
WHO?
Among our 16 participants, here is how they identified:

Early childhood educator (Pre-K/Kindergarten), current or past
6

Higher education educator (university professors+), current or past
4

Government Agency
3

Non-profit agency, independent organization
3

Early childhood researcher, current or past
2

Later childhood educator (1st grade+), current or past
1

Childhood mental health professional
1

BARRIERS TO ENTRY

- Language: 6
- Single caregiver households: 2
- Space not culturally affirming: 4
- Transportation: 4
- Cost: 4
- Formality: 1
Our thanks to Kidzu Children's Museum for offering these activity sheets to include in our food distributions this month. Kids are encouraged to “play with their food” by making edible character puppets – and they are instructed to write their own book!

Did you know that Kidzu provides free, virtual play groups? “The Nest” consists of guided learning activities, integration of early literacy and STEM activities, and a focus on caregiver and child health/wellness. For more information, go to kidzuchildrensmuseum.org/project/the-nest
Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Virtual Play Groups!

Kidzu's The Nest is the only Orange County affiliate of the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn supported Playgroups program for children ages 0 – 3 and their caregivers. These FREE, VIRTUAL playgroups provide infants, toddlers, and their caregivers the chance to network with each other and learn from our community’s early childhood experts.

Visit our website to register and take advantage of these and other free resources!
www.kidzchildrensmuseum.org/project/the-nest/

Caregiver Chirps

Quick pecks for incorporating growth and development into everyday activities. Learn, read and play using resources written and designed by Early Childhood Professionals. Click a chirp and start lining your nest today!

Caregiver Chirp 1: Name Recognition

Caregiver Chirp 2: Same vs. Different

Caregiver Chirp 3: Name Recognition

Sign up to receive fresh chirps direct to your inbox:

Caregiver Chirp: What’s in a Name?

As children develop, they start to develop their sense of self, that they are individual people separate from their parents, caregivers, and others. Having a positive sense of self gives children (and adults) the self-confidence to try new things and to understand the impact that their actions have on others and the world. One of the ways children learn to have a positive sense of self and about who they are is by hearing their name and having it used in positive ways:

Jose, I love to see your smile!

Shando, thank you so much for helping granny put away the toys.

All, I noticed how you took a deep breath and tried building that tower.

Learn Together!

For information on how to develop relationship building routines, click this link:
Habits to Strengthen Parent/Child Relationship from BabyTalk

Play Together!

Try singing this fun name song together and remember! Toddlers love repetition!
Click this link: The Name Game

Read Together!

Try these book selections about What’s In A Name:
No David, by David Shannon
Alma and How She Got Her Name, by Juana Martinez-Neal
Chrysanthemum, by Kevin Henkes
My Name is Alice, by Jane E. Bayer
The Name Jar, by Yangsook Choi
100% of families agreed/strongly agreed:

- After attending the playgroups, I am more likely to do STEM activities with my children at home.
- After attending the playgroups, I understand the importance of facilitating purposeful learning opportunities.
Training
WE NEED MORE SPACE FOR PLAY

WE NEED A PLAN
MARBLES COMMUNITY DRIVEN
MASTER PLAN

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?
MARBLES 2025
Planning for the Next 10 Years

WHAT’S YOUR BIG IDEA FOR THE FUTURE OF MARBLES?

Click to answer

Imagine • Discover • Learn at Marbles, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
201 East Hargett Street • Downtown Raleigh • www.MarblesKidsMuseum.org
COMMUNITY GROWTH PRIORITIES

- Improve Entry & Flow
- Add More Exhibits
- Add Space for Programs & Events
- Reimagine & Activate Outside
WHAT PEOPLE LOVE

welcoming, inclusive, fun, creative, unique programs, family memories, something for everyone, kid’s world, imaginative, open-ended, educational
Marbles Identified as a Key Attractor
“Boost Awareness and Interest in Wake County”

Tourism Study Priorities for Marbles as a Key Attractor
• Grow visitation to support tourism goals
• Elevate stature and iconic appeal
• Host “blockbuster” exhibits
• Become new architectural landmark
To realize tourism growth goals of 45% in the next 6 years, MARBLES MUST EXPAND... that’s 310,000 more visitors each year!
Training
Table Discussion
Off & Running
Off and Running... it’s high time to ELEVATE the PLAY at Marbles
After...

Marbles Renovation + Expansion

ELEVATED PLAY
Uh oh, HEADWINDS!

Dwell on What We Can’t Do? OR What We Can...
Family Partner thru the Pandemic

FREE Virtual Learning, Digital Content and At-Home Play Resources

• Daily Doses of Play
• Playful Parenting Tips
• Play-to-Go Products
• Play Poster Distribution
• PreK Kits for WCPSS
• Remote School Support
• Reopened w/Lower Capacity, Advanced Ticketing, Timed Entry, Enhanced Cleaning
Marbles Learn & Play
REMOTE SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM
Bring Home the Magic of Camp Marbles

At-Home Activity Kits for Ages 3-10

Camp Marbles TO-GO
The Whole Kit & Kaboodle for Your Kid’s Noodle

New!
PNC PREK Packs by Marbles
Welcome Back!

Play Safe. Stay Safe.

Marbles Kids Museum
Already Back at Capacity

WE NEED MORE SPACE FOR PLAY

WE NEED A NEW PLAN
WHAT PEOPLE LOVE
And Value Now More Than Ever
welcoming, inclusive, fun, creative, unique programs, family memories, something for everyone, kid’s world, imaginative, open-ended, educational
SAME PURPOSE. NEW POSSIBILITIES.
Emerging Hub and Spoke Strategy

HUB improvements

• Move Admin Offices to Create 6k sf new Exhibit Space
• Add Outdoor Play
• Replace Tired Exhibits
• Open Courtyard to Nearby Park

New SPOKES

• Early Childhood
• Preschool/PreK
• Vulnerable Populations
Off & Running
While our museum was closed for 8 months, Kidzu staff launched a virtual museum on our website called Kidzu@Home. We took our in-person programming and created virtual, open-access options. Kidzu@Home included free activity guides, STEAM-based videos, live programming, multilingual storytimes, and other ways to support caregivers and educators.

- **Kidzu@Home**: 234 STEAM activities, 161 literacy/reading opportunities and links. 4 STEAM activities a week, and 3 books a week on average.
- **Discovery Outdoors**: 28 activities, including a Bird workshop, 11 seed starters, 4 videos on garden site, 4 PDFs on garden site, 11 Discovery Packs, and 5 Facilitator Guides.
- **7 virtual learning kits** available to teachers that are all aligned with curriculum and meet statewide standards.
- **New diversity, equity, and inclusion resource page** with 21 free resources on the website for kids, caregivers, educators; reading lists, videos, personal and professional development from [national] experts in multiple fields.
Virtual Museum

Our Virtual Museum is now open! Check back regularly as we publish new virtual exhibits and activities.

The Virtual Garden
Explore Kidzu’s outdoor learning garden from your own home! Scroll over our garden map to learn more about our plants and see them in bloom any time of year. Click on our garden trail videos to learn about plants, animals, and nature! Check out “what’s blooming” for the most up-to-date nature projects, KidzuU, links, citizen science projects, and more. Finally, explore our other garden resources for activities such as our Discovery Packs and Virtual Garden Toolkits.

The Virtual Book Nook
Kidzu’s Book Nook is a cozy space where children and families can share a good read. Visit our virtual Book Nook to watch several read-alouds by Kidzu staff and volunteers. Explore literary resources and Kidzu’s own Book Buzzers – books filled with literacy activities related to a particular book.

The Virtual Caregiver Courtyard
Kidzu’s Caregiver Courtyard is a place for families to take a break and have a snack. In our virtual museum, it’s a place for caregivers to learn more with our Community & Family Resources. Explore many parenting and educational resources and information about equity & inclusion. Check out Kidzu’s Mind Snacks (short activities that can be done at home) and our activity booklets on the UN’s Sustainable Development goals. Finally, learn more about our Adaptive Play nights, free sensory friendly nights for children with ASD and/or sensory differences.

Home Calendar Games Making & Home About What did you see today?
Welcoming You Back Safely

The museum launched a phased reopening beginning on November 4, 2020, cautiously increasing capacity throughout 2021 with a thorough health and safety plan. Kidzu hosted free, Outdoor Garden Parties in collaboration with many local community partners during the Spring of 2021.

Area schools returned to in-person teaching in March 2021, while still allowing many students to continue virtual or hybrid school. Re-entry came with many different challenges and emotions for students, educators, and caregivers. As schools fully welcomed students back into the classroom, Kidzu began offering both in-school and at-Kidzu STEM field trips to better serve all schools in our area. Our open-access, virtual offerings are still available, supporting both caregivers and educators as we all return back to in-person modes.
Early Head Start Home-Based Group
Socializations for Karen speaking families
“This worsening crisis in child and adolescent mental health is inextricably tied to the stress brought on by COVID-19 and the ongoing struggle for racial justice and represents an acceleration of trends observed prior to 2020. Rates of childhood mental health concerns and suicide rose steadily between 2010 and 2020 and by 2018 suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. The pandemic has intensified this crisis: across the country we have witnessed dramatic increases in Emergency Department visits for all mental health emergencies including suspected suicide attempts.”

“In May 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ED visits for suspected suicide attempts began to increase among adolescents aged 12–17 years, especially girls. During February 21–March 20, 2021, suspected suicide attempt ED visits were 50.6% higher among girls aged 12–17 years than during the same period in 2019; among boys aged 12–17 years, suspected suicide attempt ED visits increased 3.7%.”
Off & Running
Table & Large Group Discussion
Thank you!

Sally Edwards, Chief Executive Officer, Marbles Kids Museum (sedwards@marbleskidsmuseum.org)
Melanie Hatz Levinson, Chief Creative Officer (levinson@kidzuchildrensmuseum.org)
Brad Burns, Senior Associate | Design Director, Gensler (brad_burns@gensler.com)