

Beyond Museum Walls

Pat Steuert and Dottie Merrill



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After I arrived at the museum, but well before we had any reputation at all, I struggled with defining what the heck a children’s museum was.

In talks to community organizations, in presentations to foundations, in dinner conversations, I made jokes that our glass cases didn’t display stuffed children, and we weren’t a museum of childhood specializing in collections of games, toys, and dolls. Confusion mounted when *What’s Inside?* opened: this didn’t look anything like a museum either!

INTRODUCTION

Mike Spock

After a while, to address suspicions that the emperor was wearing no clothes, I began to say we were “organizers of provocative experiences with real objects from the real world.” At least that’s how we explained ourselves to each other although I suspected that this phrase didn’t have much meaning for people who hadn’t had any direct experience with a hands-on museum—and who had?

A parallel dilemma appeared when we were going through yet another unsuccessful iteration of an organizational chart. Nothing stuck. The departments and projects and people didn’t seem to have enough glue to hold them together in a rational and functional framework. To be sure, we were founded as a science teacher center with boxed collections and exhibits loaned to schools. The later and more highly developed multimedia MATCH Kits were thought of as an elaboration of the old classroom kits still in circulation.

In the early years the museum experimented with a neighborhood outpost that brought activities to low-income kids. Several decades later, touring staff used a converted laundry truck, and ’60s nomenclature (“the Earthmobile,” “community outreach”) to take the museum to underserved neighborhoods. Under Jim Zien’s creative direction, Community Services blossomed and attracted an extraordinary team of artists, scientists and teachers who became the core of the museum’s developer team and project leaders for the next forty years. You can see their spoor all through *Boston Stories*. Although Community Services made all kinds of sense within the museum’s family, this additional focus made many of our colleagues outside of Boston but within the profession very uncomfortable. If some museum folks (like the Smithsonian Secretary Dillon Ripley) thought *What’s Inside?* was a playground and not a museum, wasn’t Com-

munity Services, and other programs like *Kids At Risk*, making the museum into a social service agency rather than a true museum? Where were the boundaries? What about the primacy of the collection? Would the museum be able to say “no” to other socially relevant pressures? With the publication of the American Association of Museums’ 1992 landmark report *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, the field finally had to acknowledge that they had a social obligation to their communities.

The final definitional breakthrough came when, after some years of mulling over what a children’s museum might be, it finally came to me that the answer was in our name: in contrast to art and history and science museums, which were *about* something, children’s museums were *for* somebody. In that sense we were a client-centered

organization. We were *for* children and their parents, teachers, and other caregivers. If we were *for* low-income kids on short leashes bound to their tough surroundings (research was showing that younger kids were pretty much limited to a five-block radius) then we had to get into their neighborhoods and bring staff and stuff to the places where they actually lived their lives. If kids spent a huge amount of their childhood in school, and if we were *for* those kids and their teachers, we had to figure out ways to bring ideas, activities, and stuff into their classrooms. If preschoolers were in the care of parents, grandparents, babysitters and if we were *for* those preschoolers and their caregivers, we had figure out ways to support them in their homes, in daycare, and on playgrounds. If older kids were sent “home” when school let out in the afternoons and during the long summers, and if we were *for* those kids and recreation workers (another term of the times) at

community centers, libraries, or Boys & Girls Clubs, then we had to think of ways to absorb those hours with activities beyond basketball and checkers or just hanging out.

The breakthrough was more than definitional—it focused all of our work. The organizational structure now worked because each client of the museum had its home base, function or mission: the Visitor Center, Community Services, the Resource Center, Support Services. Each had its clients, its subculture, its flavor. Each had its own mission. Each had its sources of at least some income. And with tweaking it lasted for a long time because it really worked. The organization chart, up until then always in flux, seemed finally to become anchored. It fit. All of us could explain what we were up to in simple, direct ways.



A young girl samples activities from one of the museum’s traveling exhibits that made stops at neighborhood libraries.

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My relationship with the museum goes back a few decades. As a young teacher in the '70s, I spent many Saturday afternoons doing research in the Resource Center and getting fantastic ideas for teaching science (bubbles, plants, optics) to my four- and five-year-olds. Some of the most innovative and creative curricula came from the Resource Center, which was the only place I knew of at the time to find multicultural children's literature and resource materials....over the years, as the curriculum focus changed in the classroom, the museum adapted to meet the needs of teachers, students, and instructional mandates. It has always led the way in innovative exhibits and programs. No other cultural institution in Boston has provided such rich educational opportunities for young children, their parents and teachers. It continues to grow better all the time...

—Amy Rugel, retired Boston Public Schools kindergarten teacher, in a letter to The Children's Museum

A Tale of Two Departments: Teacher Services and Community Services

One of the most often-asked questions by other museum professionals of The Children's Museum staff was "why don't you have an education department?" The simple answer was that the whole institution was focused on education; it was part of every department. But, that doesn't exactly clarify how the museum was organized to carry out its educational functions and how this process later evolved with the move to the Wharf.

Most museums had a curatorial department, an education department and an administrative department. In the '70s The Children's Museum was organized into several departments: Visitor Center, Teacher Services, Community Services and Support Services. Later, once the museum moved to the Wharf, this structure changed to include three divisions: Exhibit Center (EC), Resource Center (RC), and Support Services (SS). Both the EC and the RC were seen as educational divisions but with different responsibilities. The EC was responsible for visitor services, exhibitions, design and production, school and community field trips. The RC division included the library, kit rental, community outreach, training and seminars, publishing, extended programs for children with schools or community centers and university contracts. Support Services included administration, finance, business operations and collections. The three division directors met weekly with Executive Director Mike Spock to plan and monitor the budget, make funding decisions and do long- and short-term planning.

This chapter tells—from two distinct voices—how and why The Children's Museum became involved with schools and community centers in many neighborhoods. Some of these partnerships continue to this day. Many people know the story of the changes from traditional, static museum displays to interactive exhibitions that became the hallmark of The Children's Museum. Yet, few people know about the museum's commitment to reaching children outside the museum walls.

Among the museum's initiatives in the 1960s were

two standouts: the active pursuit of new audiences outside the museum and the development of new curriculum kits that integrated an interactive style of learning using museum-based materials. Forces driving these initiatives included the museum director's view of the museum as audience-centered. As Mike described it, the museum was *for* children rather than *about* collections and exhibits. He was determined to reach many more of Boston's children than ever before. Mike was committed to an interactive approach to learning that centered around extended investigations with real objects. This was a time-consuming methodology better suited to school and afterschool settings than to museum visits where children only had a short time in each exhibit.

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Part I

TEACHER SERVICES DEPARTMENT Patricia A. Steuert

I came to The Children's Museum in 1968 fresh out of Boston University and recent work in the Civil Rights Movement. I was married, had two young children and had been substitute teaching in the Boston Public Schools. I served on the Citizens for Boston Schools, an advocacy group raising awareness of the disparities between poor and affluent public schools in the Boston system. As a parent who was soon to send my children to public school, I was alarmed at the disrepair and broken buildings in which children were supposed to learn.

One Saturday afternoon I took my five-year-old daughter to the museum on the Jamaica way to see a play held in the auditorium. We went inside the mu-

seum where Mike Spock's first experimental exhibition called *What's Inside?* captured both of our attentions. The exhibit was well designed and informative for both parent and child. Both the tone and the content of the exhibit was such a contrast to what I was seeing in the many Boston neighborhood schools where I was teaching. No one there infused learning with such a sense of curiosity or with such genuine respect for and appeal to the learner. This exhibit made visitors—children and adults—*want* to learn more.

As my children started school, I was looking for meaningful part-time work. I interviewed for a job as a librarian at The Children's Museum, which I didn't get, but six months later I got a call. They wanted me to come in and talk about a new position "working with teachers."

Motley Night: April 1976

Teachers, students and their families from the Motley School arrived at The Children's Museum for an evening of socializing and exhibit exploration. An ordinary event for the museum today, in 1975 this was a new experience, full of surprises. We didn't expect much of a turnout ("The parents won't come out at night"), but 160 parents with their K-5 children came in four busloads and in their own cars. We were impressed to see so many fathers. "They don't get involved," we had been told. We were thrilled with the effort that the families made bringing food to share, and we were gratified to see that the museum could serve as a neutral, attractive meeting ground for newly integrated school communities. The night was jam-packed, lively, almost overwhelming and enlightening. It defined a program that continued another thirty years: Community Nights.

The school was named for the Dorchester-born historian and diplomat John Lothrop Motley, and the irony was that until 1974, it was completely homogeneous, reflecting its white Catholic neighborhood. Recent court-ordered busing that was mixing up Boston's neighborhood schools, brought African-American children and teachers to Motley, and the forced integration was tough on all parties. White families felt threatened with cultural change and a loss of control of their neighborhood school; black families felt unwelcome and at sea in a new environment. Rock throwing—at the buses and at children themselves on the playground—physically endangered the children. Throughout the city, many of the white families chose to send their children to parochial or private schools from first grade on, leaving Motley's lower grades almost entirely black. That, in turn, created difficulties. The principal at Motley described the children's perception that "kids turn black when they move up from kindergarten." Faculty, too, were struggling to cope, with teachers shifted around to integrate them as well. Motley was ready for assistance, and the deputy school superintendent connected them with the museum.

The Children's Museum was founded in 1913 by teachers who wanted to give children experiences with natural history and cultural collections objects. They created exhibits and programs for neighborhood children in a large Victorian house across from Jamaica Pond in Boston. In addition, the museum's School Services Department circulated kits of materials to schools, mostly objects from the collections, such as seashells gathered in people's travels to other countries. These were designed to be set up as exhibits in the classroom, and teachers could use them in whatever way they saw fit.

Although the program was very active, the kit materials were dated. By 1962, when Mike Spock became director, some of the kits needed repair and most of them did not reflect the progressive educational philosophy that interested him and other museum staff.

The school-museum partnering was part of Judge Garrity's plan for Boston. He called on area colleges, universities and cultural institutions to help with the adjustments desegregation demanded, paired them up with schools and found state funding for the programs.

The Motley collaboration attempted to solve some of the school's problems. Jeri Robinson, early childhood specialist, and Nancy Sato, multicultural program developer, represented the museum. Jeri recalls: "We were coming in to listen and be responsive. We met with teachers every two weeks and gave them the opportunity to discuss issues, raise issues, have suggestions. We came back with a menu they could choose from. (In those days, teachers had more flexibility to try out things.) First, we developed a self-discovery course for students. We wanted kids to figure out who they were so they could eventually relate to others. We worked with every class in the school, two classes each grade level. We took pictures of students and made puzzles of them. Kids traced themselves on paper, made dancing murals, and did an ethnic discovery project. To celebrate at the end, we had a picnic that included Brother Blue, a joyful, engaging African-American musician. To increase communication between children in different grades, we paired every kindergartner with an upper grade kid. They originally came in different doors and didn't have contact with each other. Families also had little contact with each other. Many wouldn't come to events at the schools because it was not a safe neighborhood for black families to enter, and that is what prompted the Motley night at the museum.

Following the collaboration about 50 percent of the teachers reported feeling more connected with their students' families. They felt better equipped to solve problems for themselves. The family night helped us to realize the museum's worth as a destination for all Boston families, not just the ones in suburbs or within walking distance.

It's hard to express the real essence of what we are trying to create in a box. It is a subtle thing. In a sense I guess you could call it "eloquence." What we're trying to do is make a box in which all the elements go together—not just in terms of subject matter—but in some sort of pleasing and artistic way....It's a kind of eloquence in materials, an eloquence in structure, and an eloquence in teaching. We want each box to be something that will bring this totally satisfying experience into the classroom—something that both the teachers and children will always remember.

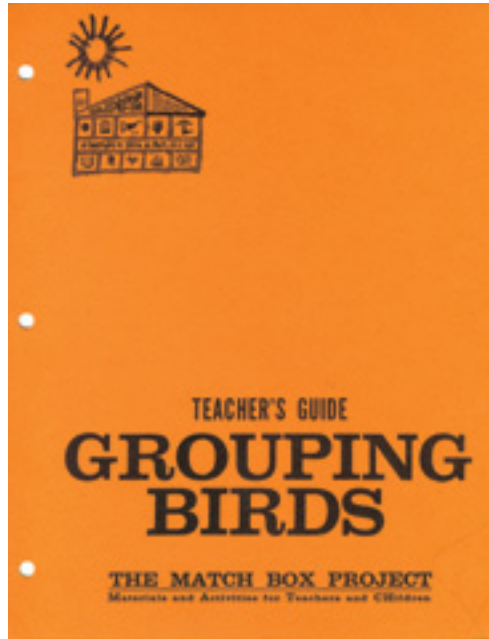
—Fred Kresse

Mike hired Fred Kresse, who had designed educational training materials for the U.S. Air Force, to apply for a grant from the U.S. Office of Education to fund a series of what they now called MATCh Boxes (Materials and Activities (or Aids) for Teachers and Children; sometimes referred to as MATCh Kits). The initial grant of \$188,000, which funded a two-year project, was larger than the museum's operating budget and enabled the hiring of many gifted content specialists. Funding was later increased to about \$450,000, which in 1964 was a lot of money, and enabled the museum to work on MATCh Boxes for about five years.

How did the new progressive education of the '60s impact both schools and the museum?

The MATCh Kits were developed as curriculum units, each lasting several weeks, on specific topics including *Grouping Birds*, *Eskimos*, *The City*, *House of Ancient Greece*, and *The Japanese House*. Authentic artifacts were combined with activities that required children's active involvement. Beautifully designed, these materials provided memorable experiences for students and teachers. MATCh Kits were developed, tried out, evaluated and circulated through the museum's loan department for more than twenty years. Later, the museum contracted with American Science & Engineering (AS&E) to produce some of the kits commercially, and AS&E sold them nationally to school systems.

The materials were painted or printed in bright colors and the objects were packaged to be handled safely by children. The activities and teacher's guide were based



Top, the cover of the *Teacher's Guide* for one of the first MATCh Box kits, *Grouping Birds*, for K-2 and published in 1965; bottom, an example of the array of colorful, well-designed materials included in a typical MATCh Kit, this one entitled *Paddle to the Sea*, published by American Science and Engineering in 1973.

on an interactive model of teaching found in many progressive schools and the British Primary Schools. Children moved out of their desks, worked in groups, made models, observed natural objects and described them in detail. From the evaluations we learned that many teachers looked forward to that time of the year when they taught *The Japanese House MATCh Kit* and students remembered what they learned years later.

After a few years, the MATCh Kits proved to be too expensive for many schools to purchase or rent from the museum. Although most schools rented them, it cost about \$1,500 to purchase one. The two-to-three-week immersive topic focus worked for some of the more innovative school systems and their teachers but it was just "too much time" for many other schools. In the late '70s, the museum received a grant to re-develop many of the activities in the MATCh Boxes into smaller Discovery Kits that could be used on the museum floor with visitors or rented by schools and community centers for shorter periods that better suited their needs.

Fred Kresse described the new and improved Discovery Kits in a local education journal:

When we first started out with this project, we were working under the wrong conception. We used to call the boxes 'Material Aids for Teaching Children.' This implied that we were going to arm the teacher with bigger and better tools to stuff more and more learning into children. Unconsciously, we were setting out to design



Loan department staff work with kits assembled and ready for distribution to schools and teachers.



In 1975, Liz Hastie works with teachers from the Trotter School to develop their own classroom kits.



Working with simple materials, students in an urban classroom carry out a science experiment designed by their teachers with help from The Children's Museum's Resource Center.

materials for teachers to use *on* children. We soon realized that this negated the very essence and joy of learning and teaching. We now call the boxes Materials and Aids for Teachers and Children, and we are trying to design them to guide both teachers and children in a common exploration and to enlarge the dialogue between them.

The philosophy of *engaging* materials, including real artifacts, remained a constant in all materials development projects for more than twenty years.

In the early '70s, Program Developer Phylis Morrison introduced staff in the Visitor Center and the Resource Center to new ideas for learning about other cultures, arts and sciences in a paper called "Those Upward Lines." She and her husband, Philip Morrison, consulted with Mike Spock on the new Visitor Center and also with Frank Oppenheimer who was simultaneously creating the Exploratorium® in San Francisco.

How did the museum get into the teacher training business?

The Workshop of Things

In 1969 the museum audience had outgrown the space, so an adjacent building was renovated into a new Visitor Center full of interactive exhibitions. Cynthia Cole, who had worked on developing and field-testing materials for the MATCh Kits Project, noticed that teachers seemed unsure about how to use these new activities or even how to teach with materials other than books and paper. Cole, who had just completed a master's degree at the Harvard School of Education, secured a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to fund the Workshop of Things in the former museum space. The Carnegie Corporation, established by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 "to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding," was one of the oldest, largest, and most influential of American foundations. It focused heavily on funding educational programs of all types, including elementary and early childhood.

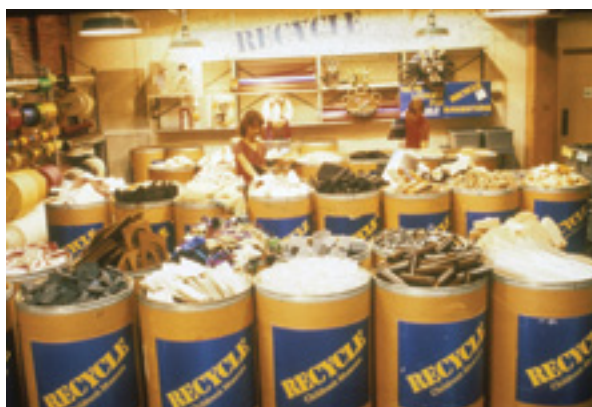
Launching the Workshop of Things happened during a period in the late 1960s when teachers were seeking new approaches to teaching science, in response to the challenge of Sputnik. In addition, more early childhood materials were coming on the scene due to the beginning of Head Start. This \$100,000 grant for the museum—this time from a private and very well-respected corporation—enabled us to gather the many commercial materials being produced by the museum and other educational organizations in one central place so teachers could see them and use them before their systems spent large sums of money to purchase the materials.

The Workshop of Things, located in the old museum building, opened with the Kit Rental Department, RECYCLE, and a Teacher Shop. Displays of many kinds

of published materials used for learning included kits from American Association for the Advancement of Science, Montessori, Elementary Science Study (ESS), African Primary Science Program, Cuisenaire blocks, pattern blocks, math manipulatives, as well as the museum's MATCH Kits, Discovery Kits, and Loan Kits, and were available for sale to teachers shopping for new materials.

Workshop staff, including Becky Corwin, Susan Shepard, Bruce McDonald and others, led thirty to forty workshops a year, both at the museum and at public schools, that were paid for by school systems, grants, and sometimes by the teachers themselves. Staff also taught courses to education students at Lesley College and Wheelock College on using three-dimensional materials to teach the traditional classroom subjects of mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. Allowing children to work in small groups on projects required training and support for many teachers. Most of the workshop requests came from more affluent suburbs but the museum always looked for ways to work with the Boston Public Schools.

RECYCLE was started in the early '70s as another way to get interesting materials into the hands of children, teachers, and artists. Elaine Heumann Gurian and Lennie Gottlieb conceived the idea while they were working at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. Once hired by The Children's Museum, they brought the idea along with them. Lennie set up relationships with businesses who would donate their surpluses and cast-offs, which he picked up in his truck and stored at the museum. Lennie, a sculptor, had an artist's eye and filled



In its new museum home on the Wharf, RECYCLE expanded its offerings of bits and pieces of castoff stuff, a goldmine for kids, teachers, and artists.

barrels with the most imaginative stuff—rubber washers, styrofoam plugs, camera lenses, and mirrors—as well as paper, ribbon, buttons, stickers, and game pieces (Monopoly shoes, dogs and hats, thousands of tiny plastic ETs, and Superman's red boots). RECYCLE grew over the years and became an income-producing service when we moved to the Wharf, but it never lost its funky look and feel. Many places nationwide tried to

replicate it. Every department of the museum used materials from RECYCLE as did many teachers and artists and families in the Boston area.

In a quote from Robin Simon's book *RECYCLO-PEDIA*, developed at The Children's Museum, Simon introduces her spiral-bound, illustrated activities volume by describing the appeal of the museum's RECYCLE program:

To inveterate pack rats, incorrigible scroungers and habitués of the Recycle Center of The Children's Museum, this book will come as no surprise. You've spotted the potential in discarded shoe boxes, old clock parts, and other 'useless' objects and know that they are merely awaiting reincarnation by a pair of creative hands. To those of you who unblinkingly drop your orange juice cans in the garbage pail, don't miss the days of shirt cardboard from the cleaners, and think that factories couldn't possibly throw away anything moderately useful much less exciting and suggestive, this book will be an eye-opener. It will show you how to see those old materials in new ways and how to put them

Alphabet Soup Collaboratives

The late '60s and early '70s saw the beginning of several collaborative organizations in the Boston area that strengthened area cultural institutions and provided collegial support for their directors. Directors from The Children's Museum, Sturbridge Village, Institute of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Science, CityStage, Boston Ballet and many others began to meet regularly to share mutual concerns and challenges. This led to the formation of the Massachusetts Cultural Alliance (MCA), an organization that worked to acquire funding for school visits, lower costs for insurance, etc. MCA evolved into the Mass. Council on the Arts, Humanities and Sciences (MCAHS) before becoming what is known today as the Mass. Cultural Council (MCC), which administers state funding for the arts.

In 1974 when Boston desegregation plans were being developed, the MCA, with leadership from Mike Spock and headed by Anne Hawley, later director of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, saw the need for a new organization. The Cultural Education Collaborative (CEC) was created to administer state funds granted to cultural institutions and school partnerships. CEC administered innovative programs to bring museum staff, dancers, theater people and other artists into the schools for multiple sessions working directly with students from elementary grades through high school. CEC programs provided ways for cultural organizations to help mitigate the upheaval in the schools and brought grant money to participating schools and cultural institutions. CEC functioned for a decade involving many cultural groups and thousands of Boston school children.

together to make new ways work.

Support for this work came from many sources. In the beginning, the School Services department was funded by loan fees and the museum's general operating budget. Kit development and teacher training were supported by grants and fees from school systems, universities, and publishers. And for ten years some staff worked cross-divisionally on programs funded by state desegregation funds.



Teachers at the Workshop of Things learn about new techniques and teaching materials available through the museum.

How did the 1970s turmoil of Boston's desegregation plan affect the schools and the museum?

In 1974 Judge Arthur Garrity declared the Boston Public Schools to be segregated and mandated a plan to better integrate the schools. He asked local universities and educational organizations to work with Boston on this effort. State funds were allocated through Chapter 636, a 1974 amendment to Massachusetts' Racial Imbal-

ance Law, and a school busing program was developed. Statewide, Chapter 636 programs included four basic types: 1) school-based programs (elementary, middle, and high); 2) school system or district-wide programs; 3) part-time and full-time magnet programs; and 4) METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities) school communities, another desegregation program in which Boston minority students

were bused to more affluent suburban schools.

Several years earlier, Mike and other museum directors had begun meeting to discuss their common needs and to problem solve. These meetings, which eventually resulted in the formation of the Massachusetts Cultural Alliance, included representatives from several large museums who already worked with the state to provide line items for field trips. The goal was to assure that every Boston Public School child had the opportunity to go to the Museum of Science, the Museum of Fine Arts, and The Children's Museum. Eventually this funding was

In the Workshop of Things, located in the old museum building, a Teacher Shop displayed and sold many kinds of published materials used for learning, including kits from American Association for the Advancement of Science, Montessori, Elementary Science Study (ESS), and African Primary Science Program, as well as Cuisenaire blocks, pattern blocks, math manipulatives, along with the museum's MATCH Kits, Discovery Kits, and Loan Kits to teachers shopping for new materials.



folded into the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which to this day distributes funding statewide. Speaking for The Children's Museum, Mike Spock wanted museums to be included in the desegregation plan and worked collaboratively with other institutions to form the Cultural Education Collaborative (CEC), an educational component of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Anne Hawley, now director of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, as the head of the Council at that time, petitioned Judge Garrity to include museums in the legislation so museums could also receive funding to provide services to schools.

Thus in 1974 a ten-year program began with more than thirty institutions and thousands of children. Every museum, theater company or music school created its own individual program with teachers and administrators from particular schools in their district. CEC established criteria that specified that programs must be multi-sessioned, not single field trips, because repeated social encounters helped newly integrated students get to know each other better. CEC further specified the teaching staff needed to represent the demographics of the schools. This meant that museums and other cultural organizations with primarily white staff members needed to hire more people of color. Not every museum was prepared to work in difficult situations; some dropped out. But many groups continued to work with Boston Schools for nearly a decade.

636 programs were very popular with students. Some teachers participated actively; others took it as an opportunity to grab a break in the teacher's lounge. Content evaluation was a challenge because the programs ranged from dance to theater to Native American culture. But teachers reported that more students attended school on the day these programs were happening.

During this decade, in addition to the Cultural Education Collaborative, Boston corporations and universities worked with the Boston Public Schools in partnerships that continue today. The Harvard Graduate School of Education's *HGSE News* (September 1, 2000) featured an article about the longlasting results of this citywide collaboration to help the entire community adjust to a new social order.

...the legacy of the responses to busing includes a transformed commitment of universities to the public schools. [Bob Peterkin, director of the HGSE's Urban Superintendents Program] calls it 'a reinvestment in urban areas.' Peterkin mentions the work of any number of HGSE-based programs, from the Principals' Center, founded in 1981, to the...Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative, sponsored by the Fleet Financial Group, to his own Urban Superintendents Program, which just celebrated its tenth anniversary. And he argues that these programs can trace their origins or their spirit back to programs that flourished as part of

Harvard's response to the busing crisis, such as the now-defunct Center for Urban Studies, directed by the late HGSE faculty members Ronald Edmonds and Kenneth Haskins. Robert Schwartz (HGSE academic dean) agrees: 'Boston is the place people go today to see dynamic examples of corporate and university involvement in urban public education. That is in part a direct legacy of 1974.'

Learning went both ways. Museum staff who had not taught in urban classrooms learned to respect the diversity in the classroom, which was far greater than in the museum at the time. Every third grade class in the city came to the museum but for many children that was their only visit. When museum staff members came into the classroom six, eight times or even for a full semester the word "museum" became more familiar to the students.

How did The Children's Museum spread its new ideas about interactive learning?

In the '70s museum workshops and training focused on teachers from surrounding communities. Every June, staff planned and ran summer staff training for the many college-age young people who would work over the summer at day camps and community centers.

Beyond serving the local educational community, service to the museum field began with many requests from groups of museum professionals who came first to the original Jamaica Plain site and later to the Wharf. Their interests ranged from the interactive exhibitions, for which the museum was gaining national recognition, to collections strategies and community involvement.

Many groups came to learn how to start a children's museum in their own cities or home towns. Museum staff from science, art and history museums also came to understand the educational techniques used in The Children's Museum's exhibitions and programs. When the number of requests began to take too much of both staff and director's time, we decided to offer a workshop called: How to Start, Not to Start, a Children's Museum. This two-day seminar, always given on a Friday/Saturday, was limited to fifty participants and was offered every other year for eight years. Representatives from almost every children's museum that started in the '80s and '90s participated. Curricula for this seminar was evaluated and changed over time and eventually expanded into a small book of the same title and published by what eventually became the Association of Children's Museums.

Since most startup museum representatives had other jobs or families—or both—the Friday/Saturday seminar model worked well for participants: one work day off (Friday), one day on their own time (Saturday) and still a day to travel and be with their families. Later, this efficient two-day model was used for what was

called Back-to-Back Seminars on other museum topics including PlaySpace, Native American Culture, What If You Couldn't?, and Multicultural Programs. In all of these seminars, presenters included outside experts from other museums as well as the appropriate children's museum staff. The seminars were usually oversubscribed, and fees were often paid by the museums that sent their staff.

Publishing staff-written educational books and materials was another way to disseminate The Children's Museum ideas. Commercial publishing also provided advances for staff members to complete their writing, and once completed, their published works eventually provided royalties for the museum, another important source of income.

The early MATCH Kits, published by American Science and Engineering, were sold and distributed nationally. Museum Developer Bernie Zubrowski began his prolific writing career with a series of books published in 1978 by Little, Brown and Co. Over the next thirty years, he published seventeen children's books, twelve curriculum guides for teachers, and numerous articles on science education, much of which had begun—and was extensively “field-tested”—in The Children's Museum programs, both in the museum and out in the community.

Publishers were found for books by many other senior staff developers. We used every opportunity and every format to underwrite the research and development costs associated with in-house staff working on projects over long periods of time. But even more importantly, commercial publishing was a way of extending the museum's learning philosophies to a much broader audience. Some publications, including *We're Still Here* and *Opening The Museum*, were not published commercially but as part of government



As part of the mayor of Boston's Cultural Affairs office, Summerthing, Boston's summer arts program, included the Earthmobile. Created by staff at The Children's Museum, it traveled to city neighborhoods offering art, music, science and crafts activities for children. Top, an art program involved kids in building a papier-mâché elephant; bottom, Earthmobile draws a crowd of eager children in East Boston.

or foundation grants. These books were sold through the Museum Shop and the American Association of Museum's Bookstore.

Looking Ahead

In 1970 the museum opened its new visitor center in Jamaica Plain. The new interactive exhibitions were so popular it became too much of a good thing. Weekends were overcrowded; there were long lines to get in. In two days all the field trips for the year were booked leaving many teachers and their students disappointed. In this small, 1,500-square-foot facility we had more than 300,000 annual visitors not including the thousands of children and teachers reached annually through the Resource Center programs.

Mike created a program committee consisting of board and staff to determine criteria for a new location and to review site plans created for several locations. Criteria included collaborating with another cultural institution to reduce costs, enough space to double attendance, a central location on “neutral turf” as Boston is a city of strong ethnic neighborhoods, adequate parking, safety, etc.

At the same time a staff committee discussed and debated themes for the major exhibitions and programs at a new location. Long range planning for the move to the Wharf provided opportunities

for the three divisions—Exhibit Center, Resource Center and Support Services—to focus their program efforts into several major themes and leave behind those areas that were spreading us across too many fields. These focus areas were: Early Childhood, Native American Culture, Japanese Culture, Americana, Physical Science, Living Things, Meeting Ground (Multicultural) and What's New became the focus of all divisions.

In the Exhibit Center, What's New? became the place for experimental, risk-taking exhibitions such as *What If You Couldn't?* and *Death and Loss*. Exhibitions changed to represent the growing variety of cultures in Greater Boston: the kids' store became El Mercado and the interior of the Victorian House reflected a changing roster of inhabitants, in turn Irish, Jewish, African-American and Cambodian families.

In the Resource Center, the programming expanded in response to the multicultural demographics of our new neighbors. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities funded the purchase of library materials focused on the cultures of each of several ethnic neighborhoods in Boston. This was prior to the Internet when teachers were in need of new materials that related to the students in their classrooms. Black History Month, Chinese New Year, Three Kings Day and Native American Pow Wow celebrations provided ways to attract audiences not yet coming to the museum in large numbers.

This multicultural program area would grow over the next decade (1985-1995) under the leadership of Ken Brecher, the director who followed Mike Spock. Under the leadership of Joanne Jones Rizzi and Aylette Jenness, with guidance from an advisory board and funding from many foundations, the exhibition *The Kid's Bridge* was developed to create an environment in which to talk about race in Boston. The exhibition also gave kids a chance to experience, through videos, neighborhoods of their city they never visited. This exhibition traveled to the Smithsonian Institution and then to many children's museums around the country.

Throughout my thirty-plus years working at the museum, the board and staff were committed to making the museum an institution for all children and all kinds of learners. The mission was "to help children understand and enjoy the world in which they live," but it was the combination of learning and fun that sparked the imaginations of staff and visitors. Learning happened at the museum and in schools and community centers, and along the way staff recognized that some activities were even more appropriate in non-museum settings.

I remember tough years when we were spread too thin and going in too many directions. Periodic staff cuts were always traumatic. But looking back I am amazed at the rich working environment for staff that produced lasting memories for families. I am always delighted and proud when I walk into a museum in another city and see an exhibition techniques or a resource area I recognize. Like an extended network of distant cousins all emanating from the same family of origin, the majority of exhibits, programs and community collaborations operating in children's museums today can trace their roots back to The Children's Museum.

Teaching Teachers | Jim Zien

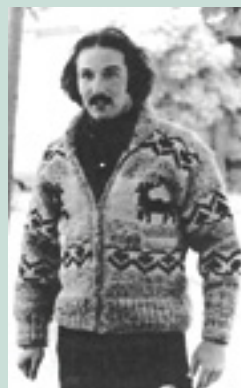


The strongest case we can make for the wisdom of providing learning opportunities for children based on their interests is to provide that very same arrangement for the teacher. The significant behavior of teachers in the classroom grows out of what they are as whole human beings—or perhaps what they *feel* they are—grows as it does for all of us, out of a sense of power over significant aspects of their lives; not a sense of power over others, but their own lives, and so over their work. It seems better then to help teachers learn what is important to them as whole human beings, not just as professionals.

To illustrate this, let us take the example of a teacher learning to play the recorder. Our focus is on helping the person learn to be a better recorder player, to master the recorder technique needed to play the instrument. To be sure, it might be useful at some point to help with ideas about how to teach the recorder, but the main focus is on the thing itself. If learning the recorder is important enough for teachers to invest time and thought, then it has to change the way they deal with their students' need to play, to hear, or to write music.

The teacher's newly gained sense of self power, a sense of competence, enlarges the teacher's view of self, and of the potential of others. It is this that we are after because it would make a difference in a child's and teacher's experience in school.

—Jim Zien
"Workshops at the Resource Center,"
The Children's Museum,
1971



Opening the Museum | Steuert, Jenness, and Jones-Rizzi



Opening the Museum
History and Strategies Toward a
More Inclusive Institution
 Patricia A. Steuert with Aylette Jenness
 and Joanne Jones-Rizzi
 1993, The Children's Museum

Our mission—to use the museum's resources to help children understand and enjoy the world in which they live'—has provided the foundation for our work. Over the years this has meant creating exhibitions and programs to help children observe the natural and built environment, feel comfortable with computers, enjoy the city, and learn about the lives of all kinds of people and the challenges of people with differing abilities.

For more than two decades, multicultural work has been central to The Children's Museum's mission. The children who visit TCM are growing up in a diverse world, attending schools with classmates from different cultures. As they grow up, they will work with people from diverse backgrounds and live in a global environment. It would be difficult for us to fulfill our mission to help children understand their world if we did not reflect today's society in all its complexity. For example, if the collections we presented only acknowledged part of Victorian America, or if our Native American Program focused only on the past history of the culture, we could fulfill our obligation to interpret our collection but not our obligation to help children understand the world.

To fulfill your mission is one reason to diversify.

Part II

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT Dottie Merrill

I joined Jim Zien, Jane Kamps, Liz Hastie and Bernie Zubrowski in the Community Services Department in 1972, after seven years as an elementary classroom and music teacher. My experience as co-developer of a Saturday program, Project Potential, that paired sixth graders with adult mentors in activities such as chess, jazz band, cartooning, cooking, bookmaking and pet care persuaded me that informal education was an area I wanted to explore. Impressed with Project Potential and my ability to work with fiberglass, Jim added me to his expanding department, along with naturalist Jory Hunken, the staff of Cooperative Artists (Charlie Holley, Susan Porter, Tom Garfield and Curtis Jones) and early childhood educator Jeri Robinson. Our assignment was to offer staff training—with and without children—and curriculum and materials development to groups serving primarily low-income children in Greater Boston. Our educational goals centered around helping both kids and adults learn by doing—exploring, experimenting, making things, doing projects, building skills and learning to use tools. I was called a “developer.” I found audiences for the Community Services Department, figured out what they needed and made connections to what the museum could offer them. Some of my work was onsite, developing programs at the museum, and some was off-site at various community venues where services were needed.

What inspired the development of the Community Services Department?

In the late '60s the Teacher Services Department was drawing a sizeable audience to the museum for workshops in interactive, hands-on teaching with activities that helped teachers understand and implement the latest in effective classroom techniques. Mike was eager to extend this service to an audience not yet fully using the museum: informal educators (afterschool and day-care teachers, club, camp and community center leaders). He had engaged Jim Zien, then a graduate student at the Harvard School of Education, to go out and talk to folks in community centers, to design a program that would meet their needs and then to write proposals to fund it. Jim began in the summer of 1970 with the Earthmobile, a traveling program in a converted laundry van. Under the umbrella of Summerthing, a summer program created by Boston Mayor Kevin White's Cultural Affairs office, Earthmobile brought Jim and his new staff to Boston neighborhoods to do art, music, crafts and science activities with children, making new contacts among their program leaders in the process. The team created a climate for learning and a collection of activity recipes that the museum has used for decades.

Activities carried out via Earthmobile coalesced into Jim's proposals to the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Department of Education (DOE). Through an NEA program entitled Wider Availability of Museums, the museum received a grant of about \$25,000. Using it to create the Community Services (CS) Department, the museum stepped up its effort to connect with a very broad community.

What did community organizations want from The Children's Museum?

In addition to the neighborhood houses and community centers served by the Earthmobile, the museum established new alliances with family services agencies, libraries, daycare centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, and YMCA and YWCA. CS staff found community centers whose goals were compatible with the museum's educational goals, and the museum worked with many of them for decades. We also bonded with industrious, imaginative individuals who led us to new organizations whenever they changed jobs.

For our long term alliances, such as the twenty-five-plus-year relationship with the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House or the Hawthorne Community Youth Center, the museum staff's commitment to the community centers' staff was very important. The mutual benefits gained from working together were enormous. Grants that supported the museum's community work allowed us to bring materials and programs to the centers and sometimes even to support their staff salaries. At the same time, the centers steered us in the right direction in the creation of those grants and brought on-the-ground reality to our ideas as we developed and carried them out.

While working with center directors and program leaders as colleagues we made the most of our different strengths and expertise; we could identify what the museum could provide that was most meaningful to the collaborations. We learned that even though we wanted kids to be able to pursue topics in-depth, big construction projects that lasted over several sessions resulting in the creation of something large, like a giant dowel house, were difficult to do in centers that shared their space or had little storage. Sustained investigations in science were difficult where children came and went at all hours of the afternoon. And workshops that taught about

cultures had to be repeated every year as new staff came to centers. We came to understand how well community leaders knew their children's needs for recreation, socializing, comfort and just chilling. And, however enthusiastically delivered and received, our educational and skill-building activities were just one part of their overall childcare program.

In the 1970s, learning through reading dominated most classrooms. There was little opportunity for art or music, let alone crafts, carpentry, cooking, gardening, sewing and just plain messing about. Some kids were taught these skills at home, but especially for many kids with working parents, daycare programs and various boys' and girls' clubs picked up the task. In addition to children's academic viability, we were concerned with building their self-esteem and their confidence, and developing both common skills and cultural pride.

We evolved a schedule of activities that proved effective for starting and sustaining collaborations.

A typical month involved:

- an evening drop-in workshop medley of science, culture and crafts activities for program leaders;
- science courses for elementary-aged kids that met weekly in several neighborhood houses and covered topics such as bubbles, wheels, batteries, and lightbulbs;
- a weekly course for the mothers of babies that taught how to make simple toys and games that encouraged the development of language skills;
- weekly music activities in a preschool;
- a course in child development for Boston's high school kids; and
- a weekly crafts course for kids, and staff training in an afterschool.

And what could the museum offer?

The main business of Community Services was staff training—helping community staff and parents to



The Ethnic Discovery Project helped museum staff learn about each other's cultural heritages before they could effectively communicate the same content in museum programs out in the community. Left to right, African-American musician Arnie Cheatham plays jazz flute for the ED staff; Alan Bell looks at Native American Paula Jennings's family albums; and Asian-American Tunney Lee tries a hair straightener tool.

Centre Street Project



The Centre Street Project, which included a four-month museum exhibit, a day-long street fair (fall, 1973), and a book (cover shown above) was developed by the museum's Community Services Division along with Jamaica Plain's Centre Street (photo below) community.

Museum education concerning city life customarily has treated its subject matter in disciplinary fashion, interpreting physical, social and political history through the conventional media of formal exhibition. The traditional concerns of the museum—the preservation and interpretation of material culture and folkways—could, however, embrace more dynamic approaches to making the city understandable in human terms....

In April 1973, equipped with little more than a general familiarity with Centre Street and an instinct for discovery, the project staff began a minute investigation of the territory, variously described by people who shop, work, and live here as "average," "dull," and "dirty." "What's interesting about this place?" project staff asked many times over, up and down the street. "What's interesting about your place? Do you have special skills other people might like to find out about?" The project canvassed close to eighty establishments along Centre Street, talking with proprietors about their skills, hobbies, stocks-in-trade, back-room curios, and their willingness to participate in the street fair.

The experience was eye-opening: a candy-maker turned out also to be a concert violinist; the toy dealer an artist. In his basement, the owner of the hardware store had equipment right out of a turn-of-the-century catalogue.

—Introduction, *Centre Street*, 1975
The Children's Museum



become familiar with the museum, to use the museum's resources, and to make the most of their own resources. We introduced new ways to use household materials (milk carton blocks and drinking straw bubble-makers, paper beads, scrap wood xylophones, etc.) and showed them how to use factory castoffs such as rubber washers, thread spools, cardboard squares, and dice to create simple math and reading games designed by the Teacher Center. We brought out artifacts from the museum's kit rental and collections departments to show children how people in different times or places lived. We introduced communities to the art, music, food, and cultural celebrations of a variety of groups. And, with the help of Cooperative Artists and RECYCLE, we helped them celebrate in their own fashion. This training happened over and over again.

But while teaching cultural content out in the community we recognized a need for our own internal staff training to open our own minds to each other's perspectives. The Ethnic Discovery Project was created to contribute to our ability to serve communities, beginning with our own little in-house museum "community." Ethnic Discovery materials proved to be just the tools for helping staff in different museum departments to know each other, understand each other's cultural backgrounds and work out some of our differences. The Ethnic Discovery curriculum describes the program as follows:

Ethnic Discovery is an approach to exploring cultural diversity with schoolmates, teachers and friends....The Ethnic Discovery process consists of two principal components: finding things out about one's own background and finding out what one's cohorts have been finding out about theirs....Because Ethnic Discovery is fundamentally an approach to personalized social study, not a curriculum with circumscribed scope and content, the activity descriptions should be viewed and used as examples of the approach designed around a variety of educational, social and personal objectives. Many other objectives and activities can and should be imagined, in as much as the subject matter for Ethnic Discovery—ourselves.

How were the programs staffed?

Both Teacher Services and Community Services were staffed with experienced educators whose job descriptions fluctuated with opportunities and needs, following one of two tracks: offering workshops, courses and consultations to a general audience, or working on special projects funded by grants.

In 1973 the CS Department had five full-time staff members: a director and four experienced educators: Bernie Zubrowski, a chemistry teacher who had worked in the Peace Corps and the African Primary Science Project; Jeri Robinson a preschool teacher who was

active in her Roxbury community; Liz Hastie a British social worker with inner city church connections; and me, an elementary school teacher who had organized a voluntary mentoring program. Part-timers and staff from other museum departments frequently contributed to workshops and events. Their fields included special needs education, Native American and Japanese culture, history, music, natural science. The range of their expertise allowed us to offer a wide variety of high quality activities, and to respond to requests from members of the community as we built up collaborative programs with them. The museum was expanding its cadre of developers—content specialists whose jobs included curating, teaching, generating exhibit content and programs, mentoring floor staff, book publishing, and representing the museum “out in the world.” Museum staff became key players on inter-museum committees, teacher organizations, cultural and social service committees, and in local affairs such as the Bicentennial, First Night, and Women’s Rights celebrations.

Although the museum divisions worked independently of each other, there was a lot of interaction. Developers had individual desks, but shared workspace with other developers as well as with design and operations staff. There were four or five desks in a large room; conversation—both work-related and social—was easy. CS developers also worked around a big low table that seated a dozen or more people on stools. This was a great place to do preparation, to get help from each other, and to dream and plan about future activities. It also served as our workshop space where the same kind of camaraderie would take place among staff and community leaders.

A weekly developers’ meeting brought together staff from the Visitor Center, Teacher Services, and Community Services departments to discuss operational matters such as intern supervision or training issues, calendar coordination, pedagogy, museum concerns (e.g. Should exhibits involve parents? Should text be bilingual?) and current events of city, nation and even the world. The exchange that happened in these meetings was usually quite stimulating—occasionally heated and frustrating—but it was very effective at identifying and solving museum business.

How did The Children’s Museum support its community work?

The museum directed considerable resources towards CS. Supporting this program with its staff solely from the museum’s operating budget would have been impossible, so fundraising was constant. Jim was brilliant at devising projects that would use the staff’s talents, further the museum’s educational agenda, and involve the community. We reinvented ourselves often, because funders were usually looking for something *new*. We couldn’t depend on even a great current funding

Building Partnerships | Diane Willow



Developer Diane Willow

Developer Diane Willow brought science and cultural learning experiences to Boston area schools and afterschool programs. In addition to kit and exhibit development, she established and sustained many of the museum’s long-standing relationships with agency leaders and set a high standard for museum/community collaborations.

In *Planning for the Very Young: Excellence and Equity in preschool Activities at Science Museums*, an Association of Science-Technology Centers & The Children’s Museum publication, Diane discussed her experience:

Developing a relationship is a dynamic ongoing process. Each community has its own ecology, and a successful collaboration requires flexibility, clarity, and responsiveness. Once people from the community become comfortable users of the museum, they may ask for more and sometimes the seemingly impossible. Consider this is a sign of success and continue communicating the needs of both collaborating partners. This museum community partnership requires the respect, consistency, risk-taking, and caring that nurtures a mutually satisfying relationship.

relationship and successful project to support itself. Here are three examples:

- 1) While Bernie remained committed to teaching science courses with children, funds to underwrite his teacher training and exhibit development work came from NSF and for his publication development from AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science).
- 2) We needed new kits and found three different sources (NEA, Mass. Cultural Council, and a private corporation) to support a series of seventeen kit titles created by eight of the museum’s developers and four of its designers.
- 3) A project funded by NEH allowed the museum to work with four regional libraries and a group of cultural consultants on ethnic family life and pastime activities.

The most interesting—and lucrative—source of funds from 1972 to 1979 was the annual Haunted House. The Children’s Museum’s original Jamaica Plain

home, a thirteen-room Victorian mansion, was re-outfitted with themed rooms such as Star Wars, The Troll Bridge, The Upside Down Room, The Haunted Subway. This exhilarating and exhausting undertaking involved a summer of design and development by museum staff and hundreds of volunteer hours coordinated by TCM's support group, the Museum Aide. The Aide amassed donations of everything from advertising to merchandise and organized volunteers to make costumes, staff the house with characters and man the refreshment and souvenir table. In the two late October weeks it was open, the museum accommodated 1,000 visitors an hour for about 100 hours of operation. The income at \$1/ person, plus t-shirt, pencils, and cider and donut sales, was about \$40,000. It provided the match for the NEA grant and supported the department for the year. After the move downtown to the Wharf, the Museum Aide, which eventually evolved into the Museum Corporation, held auctions and dinner dances before establishing its highly successful association with The Big Apple Circus, fundraising partners for the next twenty-plus years.

As director of the Community Services department, Jim Zien was generous with trust and moral support. CS staff worked in a climate of intellectual and social freedom with ostensibly flexible schedules: hours of unpaid overtime made acceptable by the feeling that one could take off anytime—as soon as the work was finished. But since we defined our own work, we were rarely satisfied that it was finished. The work was exciting, however, and the energy level and enthusiasm often drew in our families.

The other directors in the museum—Mike, Phyllis O'Connell, Pat Steuert and Elaine Heumann Gurian—also supported developers and managers by delegating a wide range of decision-making to them. CS staff built their own contacts in the community. It was important for museum staff to be able to confidently and directly negotiate with “outsiders.” Staff made plans directly with school principals and community center directors. Staff met with other museum professionals to propose and build cooperative projects; some worked out, some didn't. We also felt comfortable asking colleagues from any museum department for help. Every month staff received printouts of the CS project budgets and monitored their own spending. This level of expectation and trust inspired a commensurate degree of responsibility.

Why did The Children's Museum consolidate its school and community resources for the move downtown?

Although all of the departments were productive and successful in their own realms, downsizing the departments became unavoidable. Both the Teacher Services and Community Services Divisions had to fund their programs through grants, fees, and fundraisers. In the



Tribal Rhythms staff, Charles Holley and Tom Garfield, lead a musical instruments workshop with local children. Tribal Rhythms® is a program of Cooperative Artists' Institute, founded in 1970, which continues to work with children and teachers today.

mid '70s these divisions found themselves competing for the same funding sources. Many of the teacher training functions were now being provided through Wheelock College and Lesley College. In planning for the move to the center of the city Mike decided to merge these divisions into one, the Resource Center Division, which would include Community Services, the Library, Kit Rental Department, RECYCLE, and the Boston Public Schools Programs funded by Chapter 636. Jim Zien directed this division through the first months at Museum Wharf, and then Pat Steuert took over from 1981 through 1986 when she became associate director of the museum.

At the Wharf

Prior to the move to the Wharf, community programs were focused on neighborhoods near the museum. In the new location, programs now took place in the communities and at The Children's Museum including expanded Community Nights and monthly culture-specific celebrations.

After moving to the Wharf, the museum continued and expanded its work outside its walls. Teacher services included Saturday Seminars (an easier time for teachers to come downtown), Kit Rental and RECYCLE. Under Pat's direction, with Suzanne LeBlanc and Leslie Swartz as co-managers, the new Community Outreach Program formalized and expanded services to Boston neighborhoods and cities in Metro Boston, providing family nights and group visits, workshops and teaching materials. One example, the Teen Work Program, founded earlier by LeBlanc, gave older children from neighborhoods near the museum an opportunity to work and grow up at the museum. This was life changing for many adolescents—from troubled kids placed at the museum to fulfill court-ordered service to the board members' kids looking for productive ways to use their time. In

the mid '80s, under the leadership of manager Joanne Jones-Rizzi, community programs took on an even larger multicultural focus. Jones-Rizzi helped bring local teens into the workforce, forged new relationships with inner city groups and brought greater cultural and economic diversity to the museum's board. In-depth programs and multi-session courses led by developers, especially Bernie Zubrowski and Diane Willow, continued to be essential to the museum and remained a fundraising focus.

During the '80s the museum continued its collaborations with CEC (Cultural Education Collaborative) and the Boston Public Schools, and added new ones with MITS (Museum Institute for Teaching Science.) Program emphasis was now heavily focused on science and included preschool science activities and science with a cultural twist such as Girls Clubs' programs and the AAAS Black Church project. Most of these programs were funded by grants, and the museum welcomed the opportunity to retool and often combine museum programs for new and diverse audiences.

The 1987 hiring of Ken Brecher to replace Mike Spock as director (Mike had accepted a new position at The Field Museum in Chicago) reaffirmed the museum's cultural priorities. With the support of staff, Brecher brought new perspectives to every part of the museum with a more diversified board, diversity training for staff, and increased funding for multicultural exhibits, collections and kits.



The rich, welcoming environment of the Teachers' Center on Museum Wharf.

As the museum converted its approach to exhibitions from didactic to discovery-oriented, from passive to interactive, and from narrowly child-centered to cross-generational, a philosophy of museum education began to emerge which might be summarized as The Children's Museum doctrine of hook, line and sinker....exhibits are the hook because their function is to catch a visitor's interest in a subject and hold onto it for a short period of time. Resources—books, audio-visual media, kits, workshops and courses by the museum's subject specialists—are the sinker because they can take an interested learner into a topic as far as he wants to go. The line between hook and sinker is the museum's Resource Center, where adults and children can acquire learning materials and participate in extended education programs related to every major museum theme.

—Jim Zien, "Beyond the Generation Gap," *Museum News*, Washington, DC: American Association of Museums

proved to be useful to fund the many subject matter specialists or developers who could pay for part of their salaries by developing kits, writing books or teaching university courses. The museum could not have kept so many talented staff without these opportunities. Every major exhibition topic: Japanese Culture, Physical Science, Early Childhood, Native American Culture was developed in depth. The Visitor Center also produced exhibition kits and books related to several special exhibitions and ran programs for children with special needs and teens at risk.

More than 100 books and publications, countless community programs, years of traveling exhibitions, dozens of kits and several commercially published curriculum series were among the results of this very productive period. These materials enabled the museum to reach children far beyond its walls, into the neighborhoods of Boston. This model eventually spread throughout the country to other museums, schools and community centers.

Conclusion

While Mike Spock was creating the new concept of an interactive museum for children and their families and eventually moving the museum to a much larger facility, substantial resources supported school and community programs. The rationale was based on a strong belief that getting engaging materials and activities into the hands of children went beyond the museum visit. It was not enough to have the "museum experience" once in third grade or a couple of times a year. While the Visitor Center was the visible, innovative core of the museum, its Resource Center work was equally valued and ongoing in perhaps a less visible way

The work of the Resource Center

The Broad Reach of Community Services

Resource Center & Community Services Funded Projects

MATCh Kits (1964-68)

U.S. Office of Education, title VII-B of the National Defense Act. \$188,000, later increased to \$373,000.

Materials and Activities for Teachers and Children (published by AS& E), a series of sixteen in-depth activity and lesson kits for grades K-6. Titles include *Grouping Birds*, *Animal Camouflage*, *Waterplay*, *Rocks*, *Seeds*, *Houses*, *The City*, *Netsilik Eskimos*, *Medieval People*, *Musical Shapes and Sounds*, *House of Ancient Greece*, *The Algonquins*, *Japanese Family*, *Paddle-to-the Sea*, *Imagination Unlimited*, and *MATCH Press*.

Workshop of Things (1969)

Carnegie Corporation Grant, supporting the staff, development and materials.

Earthmobile (1970)

Boston Mayor's Office. A traveling program that brought staff and a van full of materials to community youth organizations in Boston. Many of the activities were compiled in the *Whole Earthmobile Catalogue* and are still used in the museum.

Open City (1971)

U.S. Office of Environmental Education \$35,000. A program of city exploration teaching teen about their city and building their skills using public transportation.

Community Outreach (1970)

NEA Wider Availability of Museums with match provided by income of The Haunted House, among others.

Ethnic Discovery (1974)

U.S. Office of Education. Activities/training program that helped students and teachers discover their own heritages and become acquainted with others'.

City Games (1975)

Boston Bicentennial, Cambridge Seven Architects. A guidebook to downtown Boston with site-specific activities for families to do in each neighborhood.

Centre Street (1975)

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). An exhibit/book/street fair celebrating the past and present of the museum's old neighborhood.

Fort Point Channel Exhibit (1976)

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), \$10,000. An exhibit describing the history of the museum's new neighborhood.

The Library Project (1976)

NEH, \$10,500. Development of traveling library exhibits/cultural activities for four Massachusetts town libraries and The Children's Museum at the Wharf.

Sponsored Admissions (1976)

Mass. Council for Arts and Humanities, \$22,000. Free admission for school and community groups.

Harvard East Asian Project (1976)

Annual support from Harvard University for teacher programs on China and Japan.

Explorations and Courses for Adults (1976)

NEA, \$28,000. Established permanent programs for in-depth learning in cultures, environmental arts and human development and a catalogue these programs.

636 Programs (1977-1978)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, \$52,000 for first two years of programs in Boston Public School classrooms.

TriArts (1977)

Mass. Council for the Arts and Humanities, \$6,000 for in-depth program.

Discovery Kits Design Project (1979)

National Endowment for the Arts and Massachusetts Cultural Council, supporting development of new Discovery kits.

PlaySpace Parent Resources (1981-1985)

Carnegie Corporation. Resource area, try-outs of parent rooms in off-site location, and national conference to share the findings.

Detours Project for Teens (1981-1986)

NEH. A series of theme-related illustrated maps, a monthly newsletter and a program of field trips via public transportation.

Japan Kits (1984)

U.S. Japan Friendship Commission. Development of kits for national distribution

Science Resources for Teachers:

Doing Science and Ideas in Science (1984)

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Packets of lesson plans, background information and posters exploring topics such as structures, bubbles, popcorn, and fluid patterns.

Boston Public School Kits (1987)

Boston Public Schools, \$43,000. Kits and workshops for middle-school science teachers

Preschool Science Initiative (1987)

AAAS and the Urban League. A science curriculum for preschools in several cities nationwide.

Models in Physical Science, Middle School Curriculum, (1990-1993)

National Science Foundation (NSF), \$474,000. An extensive middle school curriculum and kit development project.

Adventures in Community Education in Science (1992)

NSF, \$523,000. A collaboration with The Children's Museum, the Museum of Science, the Franklin Park Zoo and three neighborhood community centers; docu-

mented by WGBH in 1995 in the video *Partnerships that Work: the Museum, the Zoo, the Community and Kids*.

Pathways Project (1991)

A program that helps teens evolve in roles from visitors and students to museum workers.

The Green Facts According to Kids (1980s)

Environmental Protection Agency. Video interviews of children discussing environmental issues and booklet of related activities.

Youth Alive! (1992-1994)

DeWitt Wallace Foundation. Teen work and study program.

Inquire Within (1993)

Howard Hughes Medical Institute, \$275,000. An environmental and health education project for Boston Public School children.

Community Services Active Partners

Beginning in 1971, the Community Services division aided more than 100 neighborhood houses, community centers, multi-service agencies, daycare centers, Head Start programs, youth clubs, and community schools, including:

South Boston Boys & Girls Club
 South Boston Neighborhood House*
 Tynan Community School*
 Condon Community School
 Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House*
 Boston Chinese Y.E.S.
 Quincy School Community Council
 Quincy After-School Program*
 La Alianza Hispana*
 Dorchester House*
 Denison House*
 Little House*
 Roxbury Boys Club*
 Hawthorne Youth & Community Center*
 Columbia Point Youth Center
 Brighton-Allston After School Enrichment Center*
 United South End Settlements
 Villa Victoria*
 Cathedral School
 Children's Art Center
 Areyto
 North End Youth Center
 Christopher Columbus Community Center*

Girls Club of Lynn*
 Lynn YMCA
 Boys Club of Lynn
 Morgan Memorial of Lynn
 Revere Public Library
 Malden Public Library
 Malden YMCA
 Malden YWCA
 Chelsea Public Library
 Chelsea Housing Authority
 Greater Lawrence Community Action
 Lawrence YWCA & YMCA
 Lawrence Boys Club
 Lawrence Public Library
 Prospect Terrace Children's center
 Waltham Public Library
 Old Colony Y, Brockton
 Womansplace, Brockton
 Roosevelt Heights Recreational Community Center
 Brockton Public Library

*Agencies involved in multi-year projects

What Did We Learn? | A Collection of Staff Wisdom

Working with Schools and Community Agencies

Go there with some ideas, and then listen to what they need or want.

Refine your ideas so you can work together on a mutually valued project.

Develop relationships with administrators as well front line people—principals and teachers, center directors, and program staff.

Don't worry too much about high turnover at community centers. The people you train will use their skills somewhere.

Rewards need to be personal as well as professional in order to maintain staff interest.

Benefits of a stable staff are that you don't start over each year and the relationships can flourish. When teachers and center staff people trust that you are coming back, you can go further.

Community centers also have a great audience—kids; they are good places to try out ideas for new materials and exhibitions.

Collaborating with centers was critical for proposal funding. We did not just ask them to send a support letter. They really helped make the program fund-worthy.

Funded Program Examples

The Haunted House brought people who had not been to the museum before and it paid for half of the Community Service Department budget each year.

RECYCLE provided a great service to teachers, parents, artists, and staff of The Children's Museum. This program paid for itself and brought in a steady annual income. The materials were used by museum staff in all kinds of programs. It was replicated at museums across the country and still exists at TCM.

Kit Rentals charged fees, which paid for the staff costs in operating the service. It did not cover R&D costs, which were usually grant funded.

Collaborating was required with other institutions for all program sites funded by the Desegregation Program. No museum could have done it alone. Programs in low-income communities open the door to many foundations that would not fund a museum with a primarily high-income audience.

Recommendations for Working Beyond Museum Walls

Know the educational scene in your city and where your institution might fit. Lay the groundwork for working with the schools and be ready to catch the next wave that fits with your mission.

Advocate for arts and sciences in the schools and be prepared to respond when teachers call.

Understand your motivation and how well equipped your museum is to take on relationships with the community.

Often the best links to communities come through your staff members. Do you have staff living in the communities where you will be working?

What percentage of the operating budget supports public service? Is there support in the budget for work with communities? If all community work is grant-funded what does that say, and what will happen when the grants end?

Is transportation a problem for anyone in your audience? If so, tackle it head on—find a solution.

Friday night as free or dollar night did the most to open up the museum to all who wanted to come. This was maintained in good budget years and in tough ones. We established a Community Endowment to insure its continuity.

Collaborate with other service providers—childcare workers, Girl and Boy Scout leaders, Head Start teachers—so more time can go into programming than into administrative tasks.

Let people with passion lead the effort. If you don't have them, hire them.