

Minnesota
Children's
Museum
Smart Play

Attn: Jess Hopeman
Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Bldg.
100 Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: FY10-FY11 Arts and Cultural Heritage Interim Report: *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites*

Ms. Hopeman:

On behalf of Minnesota Children's Museum, I am happy to provide the attached interim report to the State of Minnesota on the Museum's *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites* touring exhibit funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The official tour began in June of 2011, kicking off in Worthington, MN and has recently moved to Elk River, MN. In February, the exhibit will open in Redwood Falls, MN.

The goal of *Storyland* was to develop and tour a fun exhibit throughout Minnesota, serving children and adults living in Greater Minnesota who have less access to cultural experiences. *Storyland* is a vibrant literacy exhibit that showcases family favorite books and provides host communities the opportunity for adult and child engagement in early literacy learning. Through this engagement, children are exposed to critical literacy development that can instill a lifelong love of reading.

Play is how children learn. It can spark curiosity, charge creativity and inspire kids who will go on to change our world for the better. That insatiable inquiry children possess deserves a dynamic, stimulating, playful environment where they can experience the true joy of discovery that promotes development of brain architecture, those critical neural connections that scaffold learning. *Storyland* allows the Museum to respond to that natural curiosity while engaging parents, educators and caregivers around literacy building play. By sharing our expertise with parents and educators, the Museum is helping to equip adults with knowledge and tools necessary to turn any time, place, or event into a playful and magical learning experience for children.

We thank the State of Minnesota for its support through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment. Please contact James Lekvin, Grants Manager, at 651-225-6034 if you have questions or need additional information.

Regards,



Dianne Krizan
President

cc: Alyssa Haugen and Jane Xiong, Department of Administration

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
Interim Report Narrative
Reporting Period: August 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

1. Please briefly outline your original goals and objectives, as stated in your proposal.

Minnesota Children’s Museum is a nationally recognized leader in building imaginative, immersive exhibits for young learners and in early childhood education. In an effort toward expanding access to arts and cultural experiences, the Museum created:



This visually stunning and educational exhibit engages children, families and educators in the world of books through three beloved stories.

In our original proposal to the State of Minnesota and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, we outlined the following goals:

- Creating immersive experiences and environments, informed by best practices and current research, to engage both children and adults in play and learning—specifically literacy-focused play.
- Developing high-quality, state-of-the art exhibits.
- Forming a diverse and specialized advisory board.
- Creating strategic partnerships with community organizations.
- Providing high quality child and family-focused training for educators in communities throughout the state.
- Ensuring *Storyland* is accessible to all families.

In addition, the Museum seeks to embed a deeper commitment to reading in families and in so doing, improve literacy skills for young children. To do this, the Museum has launched a tour of the *Storyland* exhibit regionally to six Minnesota communities. Funding from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund has allowed the development, design, production, programming and traveling expenses of the exhibit as it tours to six communities across Minnesota at sites such as libraries, schools, and community gathering places so that children and adults around the state can experience these interactive, literacy-based environments.

Since submitting our original grant request to the State of Minnesota, the Museum refined the Community Partnership Plan associated with the statewide tour of *Storyland* in line with the total funding received for this project. This work will instead be addressed through the Museum’s new strategic plan, which calls for fostering intensive partnerships that positively impact under-included children, families, and communities, leading to greater community impact locally and throughout the state.

2. What progress have you made toward your original goals and objectives? What activities led to meeting these goals?

During the last reporting period, the Museum finalized the exhibit design, fabricated the exhibit components and launched the regional tour, with the exhibit premiering in Worthington, Minnesota from June 10 through September 25, 2011. The exhibit was attended by a total of 1,074 children, including 363 children ages 4 and under, 261 children ages 5 to 9, and 450 children ages 10 and up. Comments from parents included:

“Wow – this is high quality!”

and

“Thank you so much for bringing this to Worthington. We don’t travel out of town much.”

In October 2011, the exhibit moved to the Handke Center in Elk River, which houses the local district’s community education, early childhood family education, and early childhood special education services. The exhibit remains on display at Handke Center through January 22, before moving on to Redwood Falls in early February.

Through January 9, 2012, at least 1,831* people have attended the exhibit in Elk River, including 735 adults, 789 children ages 4 and under, 262 children ages 5 to 9, and 45 children ages 10 and up. Visitors have come primarily from the local school district area, but also from communities such as Maple Grove, Wayzata, St. Louis Park, Onamia, St. Francis, St. Cloud, Zimmerman, and Lake of the Woods, among others. Nicole Huntley, the Elk River Area Early Childhood Coordinator, notes that all the visitor comments they’ve received have been positive. Many families have said it’s wonderful to have something of the Museum's quality in their community and closer than the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. She particularly points out one quote:

"This was so neat the girls (ages 5 and 6) loved it. Of course, there will be a trip to the actual museum to follow this week—what an inspiration! Thanks. Please do more!"



*This is the number of people who have signed in upon entering the exhibit. According to Ms. Huntley, the actual attendance is most likely higher.

3. Please share any significant findings or accomplishments in this period.

Formal evaluation of the exhibit began in July. Cheryl Kessler, a professional evaluation consultant, serves as the external evaluator for the exhibit's summative evaluation. The focus of the evaluation aims to answer the following questions:

- How and to what extent does *Storyland* promote, expand and/or support children's perceptions of reading?
- How and to what extent does *Storyland* promote and support children's desire to read?
- How and to what extent does *Storyland* change adults' perception of the critical role they play in children's early literacy?
- To what extent do adults receive and intend to heed and implement the messages presented in *Storyland*?

Ms. Kessler has conducted training with staff and volunteers at both the Worthington and Elk River sites, engaging them in the data collection process (see Appendices A, B, and C). Representatives at both sites have been exceedingly enthusiastic and helpful.

Data collection in Worthington occurred from mid July to early August 2011. Six Personal Meaning Maps (PMMs) were collected from children, and 11 (8 English, 3 Spanish) card sort interviews were completed with adults. While a full analysis of data will be done when the first three sites on the tour have completed data collection (Worthington, Elk River, and the upcoming Redwood Falls), a cursory review of the Worthington data indicates viable data for analysis.

Data collection training at Elk River took place on December 20, 2011 and data collection is currently underway. A follow-up online survey will be sent to all Elk River and Redwood Falls adult card sort participants within a week of their visits (summer scheduling issues between Worthington staff and Ms. Kessler impeded the timely development of the survey for Worthington participants).

Ms. Kessler will be in contact with the Redwood Falls site in early March to make arrangements for training and data collection there. Analysis of the data from all sites will be completed and submitted to the Museum for review by mid-August 2012. Results of the evaluation will be disseminated to project partners, funders, advisors, and the children's museum field at large.

4. Other achievements or lessons learned in this period?

During this period, media coverage of the exhibit has included one article in the Star Tribune, three articles in the Elk River Star News, and one article in the Mille Lacs Messenger. Two of the articles specifically credited the State of Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. (See Appendix D)

5. Conclusion

As we continue the tour over the next 18 months to the remaining four sites, we anticipate learning much about the exhibit's success and its impact on visitors. Support from the State of Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund has provided the means to develop this important literacy-based exhibit. *Storyland* is empowering adults to play a key role in building their children's literacy skills through an arts/cultural experience. Funding from the State has ensured

the Museum can provide this educational exhibit that will enhance learning experiences for children throughout the State.

Appendix A

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Minnesota Children's Museum
Storyland Exhibit Evaluation

Personal Meaning Mapping Protocol

Target visitor: Children 5-8 years old Goal: 5-10 completed PMM sheets

Materials (provided)

PMM sheets with cue in center

Playing cards and clothes pins

Blue, Green, Red, Black pens or "all in one" pen

Some sheets of blank paper

Instructions

To ensure consistent data collection, please adhere as closely as possible to the following data collection instructions.

Approach parent of child (5-8 years old). Explain that we are evaluating the Storyland exhibit and have a 3-5 minute activity for children to do before and after they see the exhibit.

"Would it be okay if your child participates?"

If yes, explain that the activity has two parts, one part before going through the exhibit and one afterward. Then move to an appropriate space and say to the child:

"I'm so glad you're going to do this activity. My name is _____. What's your name?
We're going to do one part now, before you go into the exhibit (point to exhibit if appropriate) and the second part when you come out. Okay, let's get started!"

Write child's name in upper left corner of PMM sheet. Show the child the PMM sheet and say:

"Do you recognize this word?" (Point to "Reading").

If no, say the word out loud and ask again. If they still don't know the word, ask the parent to assist. If the child truly doesn't know the word, thank them for their time and point them to the exhibit.

If yes, hand them a **BLUE** pen and say:

"Great! I'd like you to use this **BLUE** pen to write or draw, anywhere on this paper, anything that comes to mind when you think about this word."

If they hesitate, ask:

"When you recognized this word, what popped into your mind? Did you see a picture or a word? Did you remember something? Write or draw what you thought of."

Appendix A (cont.)

Offsite

When they finish writing or drawing, ask the child:

"Does anything else come to mind about this word? What else does this word make you think of?"

Try to have children write or draw at least three things the cue makes them think of.

When the child says nothing else comes to mind, take a **GREEN** pen and for each drawing or word (concept) ask them:

"Tell me about this drawing/word." (Prompts: What is it? What does it have to do with "reading"? Why did you think of this? – *we're looking for prior knowledge/experience*)

Record what the child says, verbatim if possible, in **GREEN** pen. You can say:

"I'm going to write this down to be sure I understand what you're saying."

Once you've asked the child about three things they wrote or drew, hand them a playing card and say:

"Okay, now I'd like you to hold on to this card for me while you go through the Storyland exhibit. When you're ready to go, bring this card back to me (indicate where you will be) and we'll finish the activity. Have a good time!"

Note the playing card you gave the child on their PMM sheet and the time they entered the exhibit. When they return with the card, note the time on the PMM, hand them the PMM and a **RED** pen and say:

"To finish this activity, I'd like you to use this **RED** pen to write or draw anything that comes to mind about the word "reading" now that you have spent some time in the Storyland exhibit. You can also change something that you already wrote or drew."

Encourage child to write, draw, or change at least three things. When the child says nothing else comes to mind, take a **BLACK** pen and for each drawing or word (concept) ask them:

"Tell me about this drawing/word."
(Prompts: What is it? What does it have to do with "reading"? What made you think of this? Why did you change this? – *looking for connection to exhibit*)

Record what the child says, verbatim if possible, in **BLACK** pen. You can again say:

"I'm going to write this down to be sure I understand what you're saying."

Once you've asked the child about three things they wrote or drew, say:

"Okay, we're all done! Thank you so much for doing this activity."

Appendix A (cont.)

Offsite

Wrap Up

- Review the PMM and make sure your notes are legible. Make any additional notes on the back if necessary.
- Keep completed and any incomplete (see below) PMMs together in a folder or envelope.
- When data collection is complete, place completed PMMs and pens in mailer provided and send to Blue Scarf Consulting.

What if...

Approach:

- Parent says no to request. Encourage them by saying, "It's a drawing activity and will only take a few minutes before and after you go through the exhibit." If they still say no, thank them and tell them to enjoy the exhibit.
- Parent says yes, child resistant. Get to child's level, show them the green pen and say, "It's a drawing activity. I think you'll like it. Would you like to try?" If they still say no, thank them and tell them to enjoy the exhibit.

Activity:

- Child doesn't recognize the cue but wants to draw or siblings want to do activity, too. Have some blank paper and extra pens on hand and allow child/sibling to draw for a few minutes.
- Parent instructs child on what to write or draw. Have the card sort on hand and politely emphasize that the aim of the activity is to understand what the child's perceptions of reading and that there is a adult activity – a card sort– that they can do if they're interested.
- Child gets bored, doesn't want to finish, or runs off. Enlist parent to have child complete PMM but don't push it. If the child loses interest, let him/her go. Mark the PMM incomplete.
- Parent in a hurry to leave, rushing child to finish. Complete as much of the PMM as possible, thank them for their time, and let them go. Mark the PMM incomplete if you were unable to review with the child his/her post drawing/writing.

Questions or problems? Contact Cheryl at Cheryl@BlueScarfConsulting.com.

Appendix B

Time In: _____ Time Out: _____

First name: _____ Age: _____

Reading

Appendix C

Offsite

Minnesota Children's Museum
Storyland Exhibit Evaluation

Card Sort and Interview

Target visitor: Adults with children 5-8 years old

Goal: 10-15 completed card sorts/interviews

Materials (Provided)

- 1 felt board
- 2 sets (1 English/1 Spanish) of 10 statement cards
- Blank recording/interview forms
- Playing cards
- Pen
- Data envelope
- Thank you gift (optional)

Instructions

Pre Intercept

- Approach adult with children entering exhibit. Smile and say:

"Hello. I'm conducting an adult evaluation activity for this exhibit. The activity takes just a few minutes before and after you go through the Storyland exhibit. Would you like to participate?"

If hesitates, "It's a card sort and there are no right or wrong answers. It takes about 3-5 minutes."

If no, "Okay, enjoy the exhibit."

If yes, "Great, let's get started."

Card Sort:

- Move with visitor out of exhibit entry way
- Take blank recording/interview form and playing card. Note what the playing card is on the pre recording form. *This card links the pre and post data.*
- Hand the felt board to the visitor and say:

"Each of these cards has a statement related to reading readiness and are shown here in random order. Read each statement and rearrange them in order of importance to you based on your knowledge and experience."

If they say they're all equally important, say:

"Yes, they are. What we're really interested in knowing is which are priorities for you."

- When the visitor finishes, hand them the playing card and say:

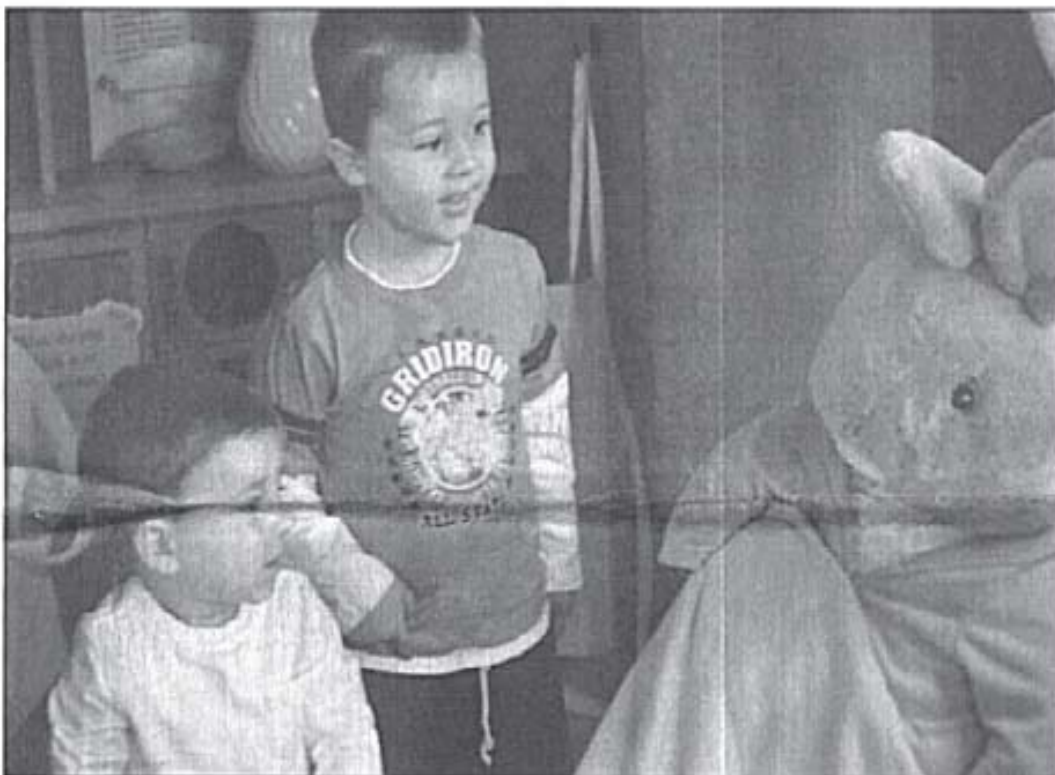
"Thanks. As you leave the exhibit, bring this playing card to me and we'll finish up the activity."

- Complete the first line of the form (playing card, ID#), record the order in which they placed the statement cards, shuffle, arrange in random order on the felt board, and set aside until they return.

Appendix D

STAR NEWS

Date: Saturday, October 15, 2011
Location: ELK RIVER, MN
Circulation (DMA): 24,538 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 1A
Keyword: Minnesota Children's Museum



Above: Isaac and Landon Bizal enjoyed The Tale of Peter Rabbit station.
At right: Each interactive station is offered in English and Spanish.

Children's Museum pulls into town

The Handke Center in Elk River became home to Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites, a traveling exhibit created by the Minnesota Children's Museum.

Funded by the state of Minnesota, Clean Water, Land and Legacy

Amendment, and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, this exhibit will be featured in five communities in two years to provide imaginative, book-based experiences for children ages birth through 8 years old. For more on this, see page 10.



Appendix D (cont.)

STAR NEWS

Date: Saturday, October 15, 2011
Location: ELK RIVER, MN
Circulation (DMA): 24,538 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 10A
Keyword: Minnesota Children's Museum

Children's Museum opens up to Elk River

■ Exhibit for children, families will run now through Jan. 22

by Briana Sutherland
Contributing writer

The Handke Center in Elk River is now home to Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites, a traveling exhibit created by the Minnesota Children's Museum and funded by the state of Minnesota, Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

This exhibit travels to five communities in Minnesota over two years to provide imaginative, book-based experiences for children ages birth through 8 years old.

Storyland focuses on three award-winning children's books, "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter, "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats and "Where's Spot?" by Eric Hill. Each book is brought to life inside the exhibit through three-dimensional and interactive stations relating to the three books.

Dianne Krizan,

Minnesota Children's Museum president, said the first exhibit in Worthington this past summer was very well received.

"There were many return visitors, whenever Grandma was in town children were asking to go back," said Krizan.

Krizan said the exhibit is a way to give kids a fun, interactive learning experience and help form the six pre-emergent literacy skills: love books, learn words, tell stories, hear sounds, know letters and read everything. The exhibit also gives inspiration to parents to help foster and develop the love of reading.

"Elk River has a deep commitment with learning and literacy," said

Krizan. "This exhibit is meant to help people understand the importance of how kids learn through unstructured activities."

Storyland's grand opening was Oct. 8, with

Minnesota State Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer reading "The Snowy Day" to a group of children and parents. Being the oldest child out of 14, she told the group how valuable reading was to her as a child.

"One of the greatest treats I had was when my dad, who was a janitor, brought home a box of books from the library. Reading to me was so precious and so valuable," said Kiffmeyer.

If you go:

Storyland is free to the public, open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Tuesday and Friday 1-5 p.m.; Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 5-8 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. This exhibit is offered in English and Spanish. A large-scale version of Storyland featuring seven books is currently being offered at the Minnesota Children's Museum.

Appendix D (cont.)

STAR NEWS

Date: Saturday, December 03, 2011
Location: ELK RIVER, MN
Circulation (DMA): 24,538 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 3
Keyword: Minnesota Children's Museum

Children's Museum exhibit has been a hit in Elk River

by Jim Boyle
Editor

Storyland, a hands-on learning lab created by the Minnesota Children's Museum with plans for six stops across Minnesota over two years, has been a hit during its stint in Elk River.

There were 720 visitors who chose to sign in during the first month alone of the "Trip Through Childhood Favorites," according to Nicole Huntley, the chair of the Elk River Area Early Childhood Coalition that helped bring a slice of the museum to the Handke Family Center.

And that does not include all the repeat visitors.

The whole family can travel into the three popular stories of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," "Where's Spot?" and "The Snowy Day in Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites."

There have been big groups, like the time a group of pre-schoolers from the Tri-Valley Migrant Head Start Program turned out, or when a day care sets aside time. Many of the visitors have been moms and dads down the street or across town who bring their little ones. Others have come from as far away as St. Francis, St. Cloud, Monticello, Rogers and Zimmerman.

"Grand Rapids, too,"

jokes Ann Hove, a member of the coalition and a regular volunteer in early childhood classrooms who brought her grandchildren in one day.

She has been one of the volunteers to give her time to the exhibit, which is staffed entirely by local folks. Most of the volunteers have come from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program or the Minnesota Reading Corps. There have also been some National Honor Society members.

"It has been a really fun experience so far," Hove said. "The children really seem to enjoy the sound of their feet crunching when the walk across the bridge and pushing the buttons to hear words spoken in two different languages."

What the kids see as play time is serious business of early literacy. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write.

What children and parents take away from the exhibit varies, according to volunteers, but many appear to have new insights on how to work on early literacy skills to help their children become good readers.

"Literacy is a progression," Huntley said. "It's an everyday activity, not just when you're sitting

down reading. There's all sorts of opportunities for parents and children to interact."

Liz Blake, a volunteer tutor for ECFE through the Minnesota Reading Corps, says it's exciting to see families come through.

"Each family has a different experience, but it's great to engage parents in what's important for early literacy," Blake said.

"Many have commented on how great it is to have this (the Children's Museum quality exhibit) here," Huntley said. "And it doesn't hurt that it's free."

The exhibit is just one feather in the cap of the Elk River Area Early Childhood Coalition. It also held a Speak Out to focus its energies and has plans for a luncheon with keynote speaker Al Quie.

District 728 Community Education and Early Childhood Family Education are coalition partners. The exhibit runs through Jan. 22.

Exhibit hours are:

- 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Saturday

- 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Friday

- 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday

- 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays

Groups of eight or more are asked to call 612-644-6519 to arrange a visit.

Appendix D (cont.)

MILLE LACS MESSENGER

Date: Wednesday, December 21, 2011
Location: ISLE, MN
Circulation (DMA): 4,990 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 5
Keyword: Minnesota Children's Museum



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Good time for kids

Bradley, Raymond, and Donna Peneche were among the Onamia ECFE parents and children who took a field trip to the Minnesota Children's Museum's traveling exhibit in Elk River called "Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites" on Friday, Dec. 10. Families were able to "travel" into the three popular stories: The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Where's Spot? and The Snowy Day. The exhibit continues until Jan. 22, 2012 at the Handke Center in Elk River. Call 612-644-6519 for information.

Appendix D (cont.)

STAR NEWS

Date: Saturday, December 24, 2011
Location: ELK RIVER, MN
Circulation (DMA): 24,535 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 6
Keyword: Minnesota Children's Museum

Exhibit open for break

Storyland, a hands-on learning lab created by the Minnesota Children's Museum, will be open during the Christmas break.

It did close on Dec. 23, but it will re-open on Dec. 27 for a few days. It will also be closed Dec. 31 through Jan. 2 and return to normal business hours afterward. Exhibit hours are:

- 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Saturday
- 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Friday
- 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday
- 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays

Groups of eight or more are asked to call 612-644-6519 to arrange a visit. The exhibit runs through Jan. 22. It is being

hosted by the Elk River Community Education Area Early Childhood and Early Childhood Coalition, District 728 Family Education.



Photo by Jim Boyle

Three-year-old Logan Samek enjoyed the exhibit while his mother, T.J. Samek, happily looked on.

STATE OF MINNESOTA LEGACY AMENDMENT GRANT
 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT
 FY 2012

Grantee: Minnesota Children's Museum

Agreement Number: B36321

BUDGET LINE ITEMS	REVISED BUDGET AMOUNT FY 2012	07/01/11 - 12/31/11 EXPENDITURES	1/01/12 - 6/30/12 EXPENDITURES	TOTAL EXPENDED YEAR TO DATE
Sal. & Wages	\$ 24,291	\$ 14,026		\$ 14,026
Tax / Benefits	\$ 4,688	\$ 2,421		\$ 2,421
Print, Photog, Graphics	\$ -	\$ 1,101		\$ 1,101
Exhibit / Program Supplies & Materials	\$ 3,250	\$ 468		\$ 468
Contracted Services				\$ -
Promotions & Advertising	\$ 4,000	\$ 465		\$ 465
Prof. Fees / Consulting	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Postage & Shipping	\$ 4,500	\$ 1,225		\$ 1,225
Meetings & Receptions	\$ 272	\$ 62		\$ 62
Travel	\$ 4,467	\$ 274		\$ 274
Staff Training	\$ 500			\$ -
Exhibit Construction	\$ 95,299	\$ 95,300		\$ 95,300
Rent / Storage	\$ -			\$ -
Administrative	\$ 3,532	\$ 2,884		\$ 2,884
TOTALS:	\$ 144,798	\$ 118,226	\$ -	\$ 118,226

Prepared By: Keith Sterner
 (typed name)

(651) 225-6031
 (phone #)

This report reflects expenditures:
 From: 07/01/2011 To: 12/31/11

 Signature of Project Director or Coordinator