

# Minnesota Children's Museum

*Smart Play*

July 31, 2013

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

**RE: Grant B36321, FY10-FY11 Arts and Cultural Heritage Report**  
*Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites tour*

Ms. Hopeman:

On behalf of the board, staff and the hundreds of thousands of children and families we serve at Minnesota Children's Museum, I would like to thank the State of Minnesota for the support from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to support our growth initiatives to expand access to cultural experiences. Beginning in 2009 and with the help of funding from the State of Minnesota, the Museum embarked on a new initiative that would take our mission on the road through the development and tour of an early literacy learning exhibit, *Storyland: A Trip through Childhood Favorites*. Enclosed you will find the Museum's final report on the first leg of this exciting six venue tour.

Minnesota Children's Museum has made significant strides in shaping the future of our work with adults over this past year. Without exception, FY13 stands out as a banner year for the Museum for the extraordinary milestones achieved and the stunning attendance logged, representing a 7% increase over last year. The Museum continues to look for opportunities to reach more children and caring adults, and increase impact. Over the past few years, *Storyland* has been vital in helping the Museum achieve this growth in mission and attendance, serving 15,110 individuals at 6 venues across the state.

Funding through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund have been critical in supporting the Museum's efforts to actively decentralize our growth to reach nearly every corner of the state. We thank the State of Minnesota for its support through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment. Please contact James Lekvin, Manager of Institutional Giving, at 651-225-6034 if you have questions or need additional information.

Warm Regards,



Dianne Krizan  
President

cc: Naomi Munzner, Director, Office of Grants Management  
Liz Kelly, Grants Specialist, Sr.

**STATE OF MINNESOTA**  
**ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**  
**FY10-FY11 CLEAN WATER LAND AND LEGACY GRANT #B36321**  
**FINAL REPORT**

Since 2010, Minnesota Children's Museum has actively expanded its reach through three strategies funded through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment. This funding has supported the opening of the highly publicized Rochester satellite Museum location and the launching of the innovative *Smart Play Spot* program. Beginning in the fall of 2009, Legacy funding supported the production of an exciting new early literacy exhibit, *Storyland: A Trip through Childhood Favorites*, actively catapulting the Museum beyond its four walls and decentralizing the Museum's growth throughout the state, directly serving more communities.

**Progress on Overarching Strategic Effort**

In the fall of 2010, Minnesota Children's Museum's leadership approved an ambitious five-year strategic plan focused on elevating and championing the essential role of play in early childhood learning and development while highlighting the Museum's role in this work. The five-year strategic plan includes these goals:



- Reach 600,000 visitors a year with high quality, playful early learning experiences
- Empower parents to engage in their children's learning wherever the setting
- Equip 5,000 early childhood educators by 2015 with knowledge to effectively engage children in play-based learning
- Increase school readiness opportunities for children who face the greatest educational disparities

Last year, the Museum's Leadership Team and Board of Directors approved the following goals to be achieved by the end of our FY13 year (July 2012-June 2013):

- Welcome at least 432,000 visitors to Minnesota Children's Museum, including more than 25% through the *Play for All* access program;
- Expand reach through decentralized growth
- Champion the essential role of play in early learning
- Strengthen and sustain the Museum's core, including balancing the operating budget and advancing plans for the Museum's upcoming renovation and expansion project

Without exception, FY13 stands out as a banner year for the Museum for the extraordinary milestones achieved and the stunning attendance logged, representing a 7% increase over last year. Funding from the state of Minnesota has been critical to this success. In addition to serving over 500,000 individuals, achieving our service goals in engaging children and families with hands-on learning experiences and welcoming over 56,000 visitors through field trips, the Museum also made the following achievements:

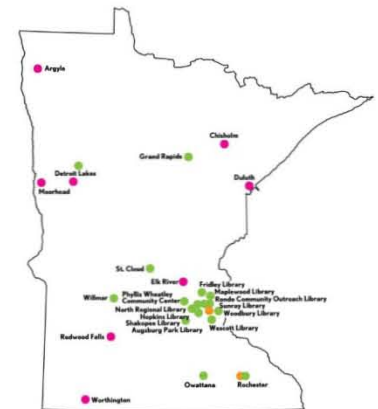
*Strategy #1: Reach a record number of visitors, including 25% through the Play for All program*

- Welcomed 464,114 visitors, surpassing the previous year's visitor record of 432,000
- Reached 15,898 families through household memberships
- Provided free or subsidized access to the Museum for 114,502 visitors through the *Play for All* program

- **Access Family Memberships** The Museum offered 2,994 free and reduced-priced family memberships, representing 19% of total memberships in FY13. These members yielded 22,702 total visitors over the year. Enrollment forms are available in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali on the Museum’s website and in print, intended to help reach an even more diverse audience.
- **Discounts for School and Community Groups** Discounted field trip experiences and accompanying museum education classes were offered to school and community groups, reaching 56,050 students, teachers and chaperone visitors.
- **Target Free 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays** Serving as an entry point for many children and families, this monthly event welcomed 30,097 children and adults.
- **Passport to Play** The Museum welcomed 5,527 visitors through Passport to Play passes available for checkout at Saint Paul and Dakota County libraries.
- **Family Nights** In partnership with community organizations such as Head Start, ECFE and Habitat for Humanity, the Museum offered more than 20 designated evenings for families to experience the Museum.
- **Head Start Partnerships** Maintained our partnership with all seven metro area counties to help ensure all children learn from highly qualified teachers. This partnership also provides free admissions to Head Start families. Last year, we welcomed 11,408 visitors to the Museum through field trip visits and free family events. Additionally, we served approximately 126 Head Start educators through professional development workshops and conferences.

*Strategy #2: Expand Reach through Decentralized Growth*

- Minnesota Children’s Museum of Rochester opened in April 2012. The Rochester site welcomed 37,978 visitors in its first year of operations, surpassing our original goal of reaching 30,000.
- Produced and installed seven *Smart Play Spots*, three-dimensional early literacy environments, in libraries and community centers throughout the state, reaching over 100,000 visitors. Total *Smart Play Spots* throughout the state is now 13 with four remaining to open this year.
- Toured the *Storyland* exhibit to five cities in Greater Minnesota
- Served 5,540 children and adults through Museum-to-Go classes in schools and centers



Decentralized Growth/Legacy-Funded projects  
 Museum locations  
 Storyland Tour Sites  
 Smart Play Spots

*Strategy #3: Champion the Essential Role of Play in Early Learning*

- In fiscal 2013, Minnesota Children’s Museum education staff presented a total of 19 sessions at eight statewide conferences. MCM staff presented an additional seven sessions to individual organizations, for a total of 26 workshops. Through all of these workshops, 1,266 educators were served, totaling 4,285 educators served in the first three years of our current strategic plan.
- In partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Institute of Child Development, the Museum worked with Dr. Rachel White to author a research summary on the types of play and their direct benefits to childhood learning and development.
- Launched a new research advisory committee chaired by Dr. Megan Gunnar

*Strategy #4: Strengthen and Sustain the Museum’s Core*

- Engaged 1,200 volunteers in contributing 33,480 service hours to advance the Museum’s work.
- Worked with CultureBrokers to create a diversity and inclusion report and action plan, helping Museum staff and board better serve our increasingly diverse community.
- Reached \$4.7 million in commitments for the Museum’s capital expansion and renovation campaign from community corporate partners, board members and individual donors.



## **Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites - Minnesota**

*Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites* invites visitors into the world of three beloved picture books. With the generous support of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment, Minnesota Children’s Museum has expanded playful learning across the state of Minnesota through the production and tour of this three-dimensional, early literacy exhibit that brings family favorite books to life. From the gardens of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* to the urban snowscape of *The Snowy Day* and the curious home of *Spot*, the *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites* exhibit immerses children from birth through 8 years old and their adult caregivers in literacy adventures. With text presented in English and Spanish, *Storyland* provides practical tools for cultivating literacy through everyday activities, while helping young visitors form a love of reading.

A larger version of *Storyland*, which included four additional stories, premiered at Minnesota Children’s Museum in September 2011. Legacy funding supported a six venue tour of the smaller version of the *Storyland* exhibit, making this experience accessible for libraries and community centers across Greater Minnesota.

### **Project Measurable Outcomes**

1. *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites* will tour to three sites throughout Greater MN
2. *Storyland* will catalyze children's development of a disposition to read
3. Adults will increase awareness that literacy development begins in infancy and continues through childhood
4. Adults will increase awareness of their key role in cultivating literacy through everyday activities



### **Project Goals and Progress**

*Storyland* transforms picture book illustrations into three-dimensional play and learning environments that highlight the six major literacy development areas (as defined by the Public Library Association and Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association): print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, sound awareness, vocabulary, and narrative skills and comprehension. Children explore early literacy skills and concepts through imaginative, interactive experiences and dramatic play inspired by the stories. Emphasizing that literacy development begins in infancy and continues throughout childhood, the exhibit encourages adults to support children’s literacy development through explicit practical suggestions, fosters an increased awareness of the many opportunities for early literacy learning, and encourages adults and children to spend time together exploring books.

Featured books are:

- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
- *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill

The Museum engaged Blue Scarf Consulting, LLC (BSC), a Minnetonka, MN based evaluation service, to conduct a summative evaluation. To assist in developing the early childhood context for situating summative findings, BSC

engaged Jeanne Vergeront, a local museum professional with expertise in early childhood development and education.

The stated goals and messages for *Storyland* provide an excellent opportunity to investigate: 1) how children perceive and connect to literacy and reading through interactive, book-based experiences and 2) adults' intention to implement the messages embedded throughout the exhibit. The focus of the summative evaluation centers on answering 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 pursue the suggested literacy building practices presented in *Storyland*?

Based on the findings within the formal evaluation, *Storyland* has successfully demonstrated support in the growth in cognitive activity, especially around concepts identified as format (book layout, design, or parts) and reading. In addition, the evaluation documented adults' changed perception of the critical role they play in their child's early literacy learning, and successfully provided adults with basic literacy learning ideas and activities they could integrate or emphasis in their day-to-day lives. Finally, a follow up survey given to adults after visiting *Storyland* seemed to indicate that the exhibit has staying power with nearly all of the respondents, saying that the exhibit sparked conversations on the way home from the museum. Half of visitors indicated that those conversations with their children continued throughout the days immediately following their visit.

Traveling around Minnesota and completing the first leg of this Legacy-funded tour, *Storyland* has not only been delighting children and families, it has been enthusiastically received in each of its communities. Since 2010, 15,110 children and families have visited the exhibit across the state at the following six sites:

**West Learning Center**

Worthington, MN  
Opened June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Elk River Area Early Childhood Coalition**

Elk River, MN  
Opened October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Redwood Area Early Childhood Coalition**

Redwood Falls, MN  
Opened February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Ironworld Development Corporation, DBA MN Discovery Center**

Chisholm, MN  
Opened June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Duluth Public Library**

Duluth, MN  
Opened October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Duluth Children's Museum**

Duluth, MN  
Opened December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012



Based on the evaluation of *Storyland*, the Museum is confident that this exhibit will serve as a valuable literacy learning resource to communities. With the launch of *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites*, the State of Minnesota and the Clean Water Land Legacy Amendment has made possible an exciting, three-dimensional reading exhibit that will delight, inspire, and educate children for years to come. Of course, the real success of this exhibit and tour comes from the overwhelmingly positive response from the communities served with this tour. Following are just a few comments collected over the past couple of years in response to visiting *Storyland*:

*“This brought an opportunity for families to our area-they never would get a chance to visit otherwise. Fantastic opportunity!”*

*“The exhibit was a very effective way to bring together entities that typically might not pay attention to early childhood education in our area.”*

*“It broadened the perspective of what literacy means and how fun it can be.”*

*Storyland* is a powerful tool in sparking early literacy for families through its ability to engage children through play in a life size, three-dimensional environment of family-favorite books. We are excited to extend this tour to three more sites, with generous support from the State. Already scheduled are tour stops in Lake Agassiz Regional Library (Moorhead) and Marshall County Early Childhood Initiative (Argyle). Additionally, as proven through a professional evaluation, this exhibit continues elevate the important role adults play in developing their child’s early literacy learning.



## **Conclusion**

Minnesota Children’sMuseum’s current strategic plan is focused on achieving growth in attendance and service that will support increases in school readiness for all children. Minnesota Children’s Museum’s vision is building a community that embraces the essential role of play in fueling the imagination, creativity and love of learning that prepares children for success in school and life. The Museum continues to look for opportunities to reach more children and caring adults, and increase impact. The submission of this final report reflects important achievements in meeting the goals established for *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites*, which have been made possible through this generous support from the State of Minnesota.

STATE OF MINNESOTA LEGACY AMENDMENT GRANT  
 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT  
 FINAL REPORT

Grantee: Minnesota Children's Museum (Storyland)

Agreement Number: B36321

BUDGET LINE ITEMS	REVISED PROJECT BUDGET	FY10 EXPENSES 7/1/09 - 06/30/10 EXPENDITURES	FY11 EXPENSES 7/1/10 - 06/30/11 EXPENDITURES	FY12 EXPENSES 7/1/11 - 06/30/12 EXPENDITURES	FY13 EXPENSES 7/1/12 - 12/31/12 EXPENDITURES	TOTAL EXPENDED
Sal. & Wages	\$ 135,019	\$ 13,481	\$ 97,247	\$ 22,419	\$ 1,775	\$ 134,922
Tax / Benefits	\$ 25,819	\$ 2,362	\$ 18,769	\$ 4,008	\$ 225	\$ 25,364
Print, Photog, Graphics	\$ 5,000		\$ 4,773	\$ 1,101	\$ 564	\$ 6,438
Exhibit / Program Supplies & Materials	\$ 32,250	\$ 103	\$ 8,235	\$ 478	\$ 43	\$ 8,858
Contracted Services	\$ -	\$ 51		\$ 150		\$ 201
Promotions & Advertising	\$ 6,000		\$ 223	\$ 465		\$ 688
Prof. Fees / Consulting	\$ 12,540		\$ 8,852	\$ -		\$ 8,852
Postage & Shipping	\$ 9,500		\$ 1,898	\$ 3,667	\$ 809	\$ 6,374
Meetings & Receptions			\$ 156	\$ 151	\$ 110	\$ 417
Travel	\$ 9,000	\$ 15	\$ 1,660	\$ 1,081	\$ 390	\$ 3,146
Staff Training	\$ 1,000			\$ 146		\$ 146
Exhibit Construction.....	\$ 245,299		\$ 180,836	\$ 95,300		\$ 276,136
Rent / Storage	\$ -	\$ 400		\$ -		\$ 400
Administrative	\$ 12,073		\$ 8,066	\$ 3,224		\$ 11,290
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 493,500</b>	<b>\$ 16,412</b>	<b>\$ 330,715</b>	<b>\$ 132,190</b>	<b>\$ 3,915</b>	<b>\$ 483,233</b>

Prepared By: Carol Aegeter

(651) 225-6032  
(phone #)

This report reflects expenditures:  
7/1/2009

6/30/2013

  
 Signature of Project Director or Coordinator

# INVOICE

*'Sparking Children's Learning Through Play'*  
telephone (651) 225-6001 fax (651) 225-6006 www.mcm.org

**Minnesota  
Children's  
Museum**  
*Smart Play*

Bill to: STATE OF MINNESOTA

Invoice Date July 31, 2013

Invoice # LEG6.30.13 Storyland

Due Date 7/31/2013

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT DUE
7/31/2013	Final Payment Storyland FY10 Legacy Expenses equaled \$3,915, but remaining grant funds limited payment to \$3,750	\$3,750

TOTAL	3,750.00
SALES TAX	-
LESS: DEPOSIT	
TOTAL DUE	3,750.00

Please remit payment to:

MINNESOTA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM  
10 WEST SEVENTH STREET  
ST. PAUL, MN 55102

**THANK YOU!**

Visa, Master Card, Discover Card Accepted