Annual Report

PROVIDENCE
Children's museum
The mission of Providence Children’s Museum is to inspire and celebrate learning through active play and exploration.

Making a Splash in *Water Ways*

After more than 16 years and two million enthusiastic visitors, a reinvented *Water Ways* exhibit debuted in November to exuberant splashing, spirited squirting and all-out squeals of delight! Water is intrinsically fascinating, and the artful reimagined environment immerses visitors in imaginative investigation of its properties in different forms – liquid, ice and mist. Kids and grown-ups alike are absolutely absorbed as they send boats and balls swirling and whirling around vortexes, alter the size and shape of billowing mist and water domes, scoop and sculpt crushed ice, form fountains that funnel the flow of mist and water, “paint” watery designs on a large slate wall, and so much more.

A Legacy of Play and Learning

After 35 years of visionary leadership, unwavering passion and tireless commitment to children and families, Janice O’Donnell stepped down from the Museum’s helm in November. In her 29 years as executive director, Janice oversaw the successful completion of a $3 million capital campaign for the Museum’s expansion and relocation to Providence in 1997, major building restoration and exhibit expansion in 2010, and the development of dozens of high-quality play and learning environments and innovative partnerships.

Upon her departure, she left the Museum a financially strong and vital community resource committed to all children and families.

Learning About Learning

During the second year of a National Science Foundation-funded project (award #1223777) in collaboration with Brown University to investigate how children develop scientific thinking skills and understand their learning processes, Museum researchers engaged nearly 300 caregivers in interviews and prototype activities about observing and supporting children’s learning through play, and tested new labels to highlight connections between play and learning. A new Mind Lab space, which hosts ongoing research studies by the Museum and its academic collaborators from Brown University and Providence College, offered a self-guided circuit block activity to encourage exploration and experimentation and make learning visible to caregivers and children.
Serving Kids in Need

The Museum’s 2013-14 AmeriCorps members committed over 22,000 hours to provide joyful play and learning experiences to children in under-resourced neighborhoods in Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls by:

- Conducting creative hands-on activities exploring diversity and appreciation of difference through art and stories to support school readiness for nearly 1,000 Head Start preschoolers.
- Providing play-based after-school and summer Learning Clubs that promoted problem solving and comprehension of science concepts to over 500 school-age kids at inner-city schools and community centers.
- Welcoming over 1,500 low-income children and their family members to play together and receive complimentary year-long admission passes at free Museum family nights.

Families Together

Nurturing Families in Crisis

The Museum’s acclaimed Families Together program conducted therapeutic visits for 500 children and parents in 173 court-separated families, guiding families to rebuild healthy relationships through play and teaching parents better ways to care for their children. The program received a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to hire a fifth family clinician and serve an additional 30 families, reducing its waiting list for visitation services.

Advancing Advocacy for Play

Intensifying efforts to increase awareness of the critical importance of children’s self-directed play for their healthy development, the Museum:

- Brought imaginative fort building, music making and other unstructured play experiences to over 1,100 kids and family members at Providence neighborhood parks for a third summer.
- Collaborated with the Partnership for Providence Parks and the City of Providence to launch PlayCorps, a pilot program to activate city parks with play and creative exploration throughout the summer meals program. The PlayCorps pilot was highlighted at KaBOOM!’s second Playful City USA Leader Summit, which brought together communities commended for prioritizing play.
- Worked as a leading partner on Recess for RI, a coalition advocating for a statewide recess policy that recognizes the importance of play and provides at least 20 minutes of elementary school recess each day.
Community Partners

Organizations with which the Museum collaborated to deliver play and learning experiences, to increase awareness about the importance of play, or to otherwise serve its mission:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, RI Chapter
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence
- Boys Town New England
- Brown University’s Science Center Outreach
- The Causality and Mind Lab, Brown University
- Children’s Friend
- Children’s Friend Head Start
- Community Care Alliance
- Family Service of Rhode Island
- Federal Hill House
- Highlander Charter School
- Joslin Community Center
- KaBOOM!
- Kid Think, Providence College
- Kidoinfo
- Learning Community Charter School
- Louie’s Place
- Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School
- Mental Health Association of Rhode Island
- Mount Hope Learning Center
- The Nina Foundation
- Partnership for Providence Parks
- Paul Cuffee Charter School
- Pawtucket Child Opportunity Zone
- Providence Children and Youth Cabinet
- Providence Children’s Initiative
- Providence Community Library
- Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism
- Providence Department of Parks + Recreation
- Providence Healthy Communities Office
- Providence YMCA Youth Services
- RI Association for Infant Mental Health
- RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- RI Department of Children, Youth and Families
- Robert L Bailey IV Elementary School
- Serve Rhode Island
- Washington Park Center
- Youth Restoration Project

Providence Children’s Museum welcomed:

- 160,027 onsite visits, nearly 50,000 free of charge
- 11,123 kids and caregivers through offsite outreach programs
- 9,155 members in 1,972 families
- 8,112 guests at 291 birthday celebrations
- 4,976 kids and 1,747 chaperones visiting with schools, preschools and camp groups
- 522 Scouts and leaders at evening adventures

Sharing Our Expertise

The Museum provided professional development, offered training in facilitating play and learning experiences, and served in an advisory capacity to the following groups and organizations.

Professional development training for educators and childcare providers

- Children’s Friend Head Start – diversity and storytelling activities for preschoolers
- Beautiful Beginnings – hands-on science for early childhood
- Preserve RI – engaging family visitors
- Providence Public Library – diversity and storytelling activities
- RI After School Plus Alliance – hands-on science for after school
- RI Office of Library and Information Services – play and literacy, hands-on science

Advisory activities and professional associations

- Association of Children’s Museums – board of directors
- Child Welfare Advisory Group – advisory and advocacy committee
- Children’s Friend – visitation committee co-chair
- London Children’s Museum – emerging museum advisory board
- Museum of Science, Boston – National Living Lab advisory committee
- New England Museum Association – board of directors and exhibitions group co-chair
- Partnership for Providence Parks – board of directors and Playful Providence planning committee
- PopUp Providence – selection committee
- RI Department of Children, Youth and Families – permanency support team
- RI Foundation – Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence Emerging Leaders mentor
- Statewide Visitation Services Group – visitation committee

Conference presentations

- American Alliance of Museums – observing children’s play and learning
- Association of Children’s Museums – museum learning environments, making learning through play visible
- KaBOOM!’s Playful City USA Leaders Summit – PlayCorps pilot program
- New England Museum Association – participatory exhibits, pop-up programs, reflective practice

Museum staff also presented to various groups about:

- Access and inclusion, child development, exhibit design, the importance of play to learning, and research in children’s museums.
Hands-on Programs

Nearly 24,000 participants engaged in interactive exploration during hundreds of hours of facilitated public programs. Families tinkered and invented creative contraptions with the intriguing Rigamajig building kit; celebrated Seuss with a wacky weekend of activities; mingled with dozens of amazing animals; and joined playful participatory performances by storytellers, musicians, puppeteers and more. All summer long, kids climbed aboard working vehicles large and small and constructed forts and castles with big blue Imagination Playground blocks. And in celebration of the new Water Ways exhibit, visitors created water art, painted and sculpted with ice, designed and raced paddle boats, and discovered other fun-filled water play.

Major Awards and Recognition

In 2014, the Museum received:

- A new three-year AmeriCorps grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service and Serve Rhode Island – one of only two organizations in Rhode Island to receive highly-competitive full federal funding.

- A Best Practice Award from the Rhode Island Foundation’s Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence, in recognition of outstanding practices in leadership for increasing operational efficiencies by defining clear strategic priorities, restructuring staff and adding expertise to create a strong executive team.
## Finances

### Statement of Financial Activity Year Ended December 31, 2014*

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<tr>
<th><strong>INCOME</strong></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<td>Gifts &amp; Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER INCOME TOTALS</strong></td>
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<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
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<td>Exhibits &amp; Programs</td>
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<td><strong>$300,702</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,906,850</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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*Unaudited

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### Fundraising and Special Events

The Museum’s Annual Campaign raised $291,800 for general operations from 240 generous individuals, corporations and foundations, and major gifts for the *Water Ways* revamp totaled $289,000. Annual gala *Unplugged – The Way to Play* netted over $66,000 to provide playful learning opportunities for families in need, and honored community leaders whose work fosters healthy children and strong families. The 31st *Allen H. Chatterton Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament* netted a record $47,500 to benefit the Museum’s enriching hands-on exhibits and educational programs. A new event, *Play On*, invited “big kids” to try imaginative activities during a playful night out at the Museum.

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### Free and Discounted Admissions

- Regular Admission: 25%
- Free Admission Members: 25%
- Discounted Admission: 9%
- Special Fees: 7%
- Free Admission Others: 31%

### Families and Friends Come From

- Greater Providence: 30%
- Kent County: 9%
- East Bay: 12%
- Massachusetts: 22%
- Kent County: 9%
- South County: 4%
- South County: 4%
- Connecticut: 3%

### Income

- Admissions: 20%
- Memberships: 12%
- Families Together Services: 12%
- Government Grants: 14%
- Private Giving: 32%

- Gift Shop, Rentals and Parties: 4%
- Program and Consulting Fees: 4%

- Earned: 52%
- Donated: 46%
- Investment Income: 2%
Board of Directors
Matthew O. Littlefield, President
Merin H. Browning III, Vice President
Christian LeBl-Cote, Vice President
Peter M. Gervais, Treasurer
Linda Rockwell, Secretary
Jessica Holden Sherwood, Immediate Past President
Robert T. Banaski
Christine K. Bush
Bintou Chatterton
Stanley S. Dorsey
Russell B. Gross Jr.
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Gertrude F. Jones
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Jennifer N. Lippman
Jeffrey E. Meyer
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Dana Alexander Nolfie
Heather A. Pierce
Marianne Pursley
Martha Roberts
Edmund Shallcross III
Krista L. Thomas
Janice O’Donnell, Executive Director

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Stephen A. Cardi II
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Patrice E. Cooper
Florence A. Crisp
Bradford S. Dimeo
Jonathan Duffy
Nancy Band Ehrich
Frances H. Gammell-Roach
Michael E. Glass
Kathleen C. Goulding
Suzanne M. Hall
Adam Hamblett
Jay Howell
David C. Isenberg
Joseph H. Kimball Jr.
Melinda Knight
Julie A. Lancia
Diane S. Larsen
Anne Maxwell Livingston
David M. Madden
Winfield W. Major
Ruth K. Mullen
Ruth Orthwein
Carol A. Peterson
Edward P. Pieroni
Elizabeth H. Roberts
Ellen Mossip Saville
Henry A. Silvia
Thomas J. Skala
Andrew Carl Spacone
Neil D. Steinberg
Michael F. Sweeney
Manuel J. Vales IV
Stephen D. Zubiago

The Children’s Museum Council
Kim Anderson
Cheryl Andreozzi
Ashley Barrett
Margaret Batting
Martha Boss Bennett
Felicia Bishop
Michaela Brockmann
Amy Brown
KD Brown
Wendy Brown
Gretchen Brunelli
Betty Capozzi
Christine Capozzi
Lynn Cardi
Erin Chace
Darcy Charleson
Christina Chase
Bintou Chatterton*
Michelle Collie
Amy I. Doorley
Mary E. Engle
Bri Gallo
Frances H.
Gammell-Roach
Charise Perkett Glasson
Elizabeth Goldberg
Wendy Gray*
Kristen Haffenreffer
Suzanne M. Hall*
Nancy Kimball
Melinda Knight
Julie A. Lancia
Susan Littlefield
Jennifer Massotti
Ruth Orthwein*
Christine Peabody*
Mindy Penney
Heather A. Pierce*
Robert Portugal
Julia Richardson
Heather Savioe
Tiffani Schmitt-Signorelli*
Erika Simonson
Cynthia Janikies Simonson
Meg Stowe
Sally Scharchan
Krista Thomas*
Carla Lin Vieira
Nicole Kirk Webster
Marcy Wemple
James J. Nagelberg
Dana Alexander Nolfie
Heather A. Pierce
Marianne Pursley
Martha Roberts
Edmund Shallcross III
Krista L. Thomas
Janice O’Donnell, Executive Director
*2014 Gala Committee Member

Volunteers
In 2014, 277 dedicated volunteers, interns and college work-study students served more than 11,000 hours. The following volunteers and interns served over 100 hours.
DeBra Albanese
Christine Bell
Ysabel Canela
The Crowther Family
Jin Diana Du
Diane Grenon
Greg Joseph
Jenny Navas

Museum Staff
Megan Beauregard
Experience Coordinator
Sarah Ann Brockway
Visitor Experience Manager
Heidi Brining
Program Director, Families Together
Sara Clarke
Events Manager
Denise Costello
Development Associate
Rachel Cronin
Visitor Experience Manager
Seth Finkle
Experience Coordinator
Megan Fischer
Director of Communications & Marketing
Melissa Gomes
Experience Coordinator
Amanda Grandchamp
Clinician, Families Together
Nedria Greco
Clinician, Families Together
Valerie Haggerty-Silva
Graphic Designer
Nicole Kukla
Housekeeper
Jennifer Laurelli
Director of Development
Cheryl Lepre
Clinician, Families Together
Suzy Letourneau
Project Researcher
Amber Massed
Clinician, Families Together
Robin Meisner
Director of Exhibits
Jessica Neuwirth
Exhibit Developer
Janice O’Donnell
Executive Director
Samantha Polon
Program Director, Families Together
Katie Poor
Exhibit Coordinator
Kolby Purcell
Assistant Director of Finance & Operations
Liliana Rios
Program Assistant, Families Together
James Robinson
Building Manager
Chris Sancomb
Exhibit Designer & Fabricator
Cathy Saunders
Director of Education
Nick Ventola
Exhibit Technician

Volunteer Advisors and Committee Members
Charlie Angione
Laurence Blau
Allen H. Chatterton III
Brian S. Dunckley
Laura Elkhay
Mark Fisher
Mark Hogun
Virginia Hopkins
John Houle
Marcus Howell
Kate Carney Larisa

In addition to members of the Board of Directors and Overseers and the Children’s Museum Council
*2014 Gala Committee Member

2013-14 AmeriCorps Team
Meg Conery
Vanessa Guerrero
Amanda Howard
Faina Kostyukovsky
Sarah Loret
David Liu
Ashley Moore
Tracey Mullery

Editor  Megan Fischer       Graphic Designer  Valerie Haggerty-Silva
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2014 MUSEUM DONORS

**Gifts of $100,000 and above**
- The Charton Foundations Corporation for National and Community Service and Rhode Island National Science Foundation
- **Gifts of $25,000 - $99,999**
- Amigos Foundation (10+)
- The Collins Foundation (10+)
- The Norman & Rosealee Family Foundation
- MetLife Foundation (10+)
- The News Foundation
- Carol A. Peterson (10+)
  - The Rhode Island Foundation
- **Gifts of $10,000 - $24,999**
- Amsden Bank
- Bank of America Charitable Foundation (10+)
- CVS Caremark Charity Classic
- Domeniconi Resources (10+)
- The EEMS Foundation
- The Feinstein Foundation (5+)
- John Rockwell Levy Family Foundation (30+)
- National Grid
- Nonprofit Finance Fund/
  - Providence Travel Council
- Trustee
  - Investments
- American Emerald Group, Inc.
- AAA Southern New England
- Anonymous (3)
- Bill Olin
- Mr. & Mrs. Jack O'Donnell
- Marcum LLP
- (5+)

**Gifts of $5,000 - $9,999**
- Amtrac, Inc.
- BNY Mellon Wealth Management
- Barclays Wealth
- Bristol County Savings
- BNY Mellon Wealth Management
- WPRI 12/Fox Providence
- Gifts
  - $2,499
  - $2,499
- Providence Tourism Council
- Nonprofit Finance Fund/
  - Providence Travel Council
- Trustee
  - Investments
- American Emerald Group, Inc.
- AAA Southern New England
- Anonymous (3)
- Bill Olin
- Mr. & Mrs. Jack O'Donnell
- Marcum LLP
- (5+)

**Gifts of $2,500 - $4,999**
- Amsden Bank
- Bank of America Charitable Foundation (10+)
- CVS Caremark Charity Classic
- Domeniconi Resources (10+)
- The EEMS Foundation
- The Feinstein Foundation (5+)
- John Rockwell Levy Family Foundation (30+)
- National Grid
- Nonprofit Finance Fund/
  - Providence Travel Council
- Trustee
  - Investments
- American Emerald Group, Inc.
- AAA Southern New England
- Anonymous (3)
- Bill Olin
- Mr. & Mrs. Jack O'Donnell
- Marcum LLP
- (5+)

**Gifts of $500 - $999**
- Atlantic, Inc.
- BNY Mellon Wealth Management
- Barclays Wealth
- Bristol County Savings
- BNY Mellon Wealth Management
- WPRI 12/Fox Providence
- Gifts
  - $2,499
  - $2,499
- Providence Tourism Council
- Nonprofit Finance Fund/
  - Providence Travel Council
- Trustee
  - Investments
- American Emerald Group, Inc.
- AAA Southern New England
- Anonymous (3)
- Bill Olin
- Mr. & Mrs. Jack O'Donnell
- Marcum LLP
- (5+)