For a fourth summer, join the Children’s Museum at neighborhood parks across Providence to build forts, blow bubbles, and discover other open-ended fun with loose parts. The activities build on the Museum’s efforts to support unstructured, child-directed play throughout the community and are part of its participation in Playful Providence – a citywide celebration of play commemorating Providence’s fourth consecutive recognition as a Playful City, presented in collaboration with the Partnership for Providence Parks and the Providence Department of Parks + Recreation.

Play at the Park!

Through September 7, Providence Children’s Museum hosts *My Sky*, an immersive traveling exhibit that encourages families to look up and be inspired by the wonders of the universe. Produced by Boston Children’s Museum in collaboration with Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and NASA, *My Sky* is designed to engage children ages 5 to 10 and their adults in interactive explorations of objects and phenomena visible in the sky. The exhibit gives caregivers an opportunity to help children practice foundational science skills such as observing, noticing patterns, predicting, estimating and thinking creatively – skills that are fundamental to astronomy and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) thinking, and that scientists and engineers use every day.

*My Sky* invites families to investigate the sun, moon and stars together as they:

- Gaze through a telescope to see stars and planets in their real-time positions in the sky.
- Examine real footage of the nearest star, and see solar events like flares, eclipses, solar tornados and more in a movie of the sun.
- Explore the phases of the moon by manipulating a mechanical model.
- Find familiar constellations and invent new ones.
- Discover the twinkling night sky in a large darkened dome.
- Sit around a campfire and climb inside a tent to tell nighttime stories and hear music inspired by the sky.
- Watch the sun setting and the moon rising, and find planets, constellations and more in a 24-hour time lapse of the sky.
- Meet scientists, artists and others who are inspired by the sky above.

In celebration of *My Sky*, try activities exploring the daytime and night sky in *Discovery Studio* in July and August. Design constellations, create asteroids, make a sundial and solar warmer, and more. See the calendar for program dates and times.

*My Sky* was produced by Boston Children’s Museum in collaboration with Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and NASA; sponsored in Providence by June Rockwell Levy Foundation.

For more information, visit www.ChildrenMuseum.org.
From the Director

Over the past several years, the children’s museum community has engaged in a lively discussion about how our institutions can move “from nice to necessary.” The international Association of Children’s Museums also led a multi-year visioning exercise titled “Reimagining Children’s Museums,” which led colleagues on a thought-provoking journey about what our institutions and the children’s museum field can and should look like in the future. Many conversations centered on the question of whether a children’s museum can be more than a museum – meaning more than a brick and mortar building that welcomes families for fun-filled play and learning experiences.

Long-time Museum director Janice O’Donnell provocatively stated, “In an ideal world, there would be no children’s museums.” She envisioned a future society that prioritizes children and their needs, rights, and opportunities to play – where our communities embrace kids and play at their core. Where kids and families are carefully considered in city planning and possibilities for play and exploration are integrated everywhere, not just in places like museums, parks and playgrounds. But until that utopian vision has been realized, how can children’s museums ensure they have a powerful reach into and impact on their communities?

Providence Children’s Museum staff discussed just that at the Association of Children’s Museum’s annual conference in May. In a session about leading and shaping the community’s conversation about its youngest citizens, I spoke about our deep commitment to advocacy for reclaiming time and space for children’s play, including our roles in Providence PlayCorps (see below) and Recess for RI, a coalition working to restore recess to the school day. Exhibits Director Robin Meisner and Research & Evaluation Specialist Suzy Letourneau shared the Museum’s research to make children’s learning visible, in collaboration with Brown University. And then of course there’s our critical outreach to low-income children for nearly two decades through our AmeriCorps program, and Families Together, our acclaimed therapeutic visitation program that nurtures court-separated children and families through play.

More than a museum? Absolutely!

– Megan Fischer, Interim Executive Director

Museum News

- Last summer, the Museum collaborated with the Partnership for Providence Parks and the City of Providence’s Department of Parks + Recreation and Healthy Communities Office to launch Providence PlayCorps, a successful pilot program to activate city parks with play and creative exploration in conjunction with the free federal summer meals program. Facilitators trained in playwork techniques were stationed at five low-income neighborhood parks throughout the summer, and meal participation at the sites increased by an average of 104 percent. This summer, the program expands to seven sites – Billy Taylor Park (Mt. Hope), Backlin Park (West End), Father Lennon Park (Smith Hill), General Street Park (Wanskuck), Harriet and Sayles Park (Southside), Pastore Park (Federal Hill) and Wallace Street Park (Silver Lake) – plus a “PlayMobile” that serves other parks around the city.

- The Museum has designed an interactive sound sculpture for Harriet and Sayles Park in South Providence as part of PopUp Providence – an innovative urban place-making program funded by Providence’s Department of Planning + Development that supports temporary and inexpensive artistic and cultural interventions to enliven neighborhoods across the city. Installed through July and August, the sculpture invites kids and adults to explore rhythm and make music on a variety of inventive percussion instruments created from intriguing reclaimed objects.

The mission of Providence Children’s Museum is to inspire and celebrate learning through active play and exploration.
Inspiring a Love of Learning

Through its AmeriCorps program – MuseumCorps – the Children’s Museum is able to build lasting partnerships with organizations that prioritize children and value their right, need and ability to play and learn in their own ways.

Since 1997, MuseumCorps members have given children from greater Providence Head Start their first Children’s Museum experience. This year, members brought creative problem-solving activities to 900 preschoolers in classrooms at Children’s Friend Head Start and welcomed children on field trips to the Museum.

For as many years, MuseumCorps has partnered with out-of-school time programs to deliver “Learning Clubs” for elementary school-age participants who attend some of Providence’s most under-resourced schools. MuseumCorps members create joyful learning environments, mixing in mathematical skills and content through engaging hands-on activities. Since 2011, MuseumCorps members have been a daily presence at the Boys & Girls Club in Providence’s Southside, leading Learning Clubs for 100 children each year. This year, Learning Clubs were also a staple of the after-school program at Highlander Charter School in South Providence, serving another 60 children year round, and reached Federal Hill House and Mt. Hope Learning Center.

For their commitment to inspire a love of learning for kids in need, thanks to 2014-15 MuseumCorps members Mollie Bedick, Elizabeth Boyer, Mary Burke, Lucia Carroll, Catelyn DeSanto, Sarah Loret, William Lucca, Savannah McMullen, Paris Price, Mary Rocha, Ali Sandler and Olivia Strauss.

The Museum’s AmeriCorps program is made possible by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service and Serve Rhode Island with support from additional sponsors, listed on the AmeriCorps pages of the Museum’s website.

On view this summer, discover these engaging new displays:

- The “geometry gallery” in ThinkSpace features changing displays of natural and man-made objects that provide strong visual representations of spatial thinking, highlighting shapes in everyday life and the designed environment. The newest installation is a selection of astronomy-related objects on loan from Brown University’s Ladd Observatory and chosen to connect to the My Sky exhibit. Take a look at a model of the moon that depicts craters, seas and other geographic features of its surface, and see star charts – maps of the night sky used to identify stars, planets, galaxies and more.

- Peek into the atrium walkway window boxes for a tiny tour of “Little Rhody.” Follow a quahog on a playful journey of the Ocean State’s greatest hits – sampling frozen lemonade, visiting the big blue bug, taking a spin on a Looff Carousel, and more!

- In the lobby display case, take a train traveling adventure through a fantasy land featuring an intriguing mixture of handcrafted items and objects from the Museum’s collections.

Stories about the power of children’s play, observed by Museum staff and volunteers

This story of an engaging lesson at the Boys & Girls Club was shared by MuseumCorps Educator Ali Sandler.

It was a busy afternoon at the Boys & Girl’s Club and the children were excited to start their new curriculum on how to think like a scientist. At a station where kids could make “quicksand,” three girls studied a tub full of a goopy cornstarch and water mixture. Their goal was to use the scientific method and make a hypothesis about what would happen if they dropped plastic objects into the tub. They experimented and concluded that their hypothesis that the objects would sink was wrong, since they actually ended up floating. A fourth grader decided she wanted to make them sink – she had a problem that she wanted to fix. She decided she needed to add more water to make the mixture less solid and more of a liquid. After adding a scoop of water, she tested it again. In the end, she realized that she needed to double the ratio of water to cornstarch to fulfill her goal. She jumped with excitement, her science journal sticky with quicksand, and felt like a real scientist for the first time.

Visit the Museum’s blog for more stories of the impact of its AmeriCorps program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td><strong>Discover My Sky</strong>, a traveling exhibit exploring the universe, through September 7!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Stars and Night Sky in Discovery Studio</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 3:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Wheels at Work Bobcat Utility Vehicle in Discovery Studio</td>
<td>10:00 AM - Noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Stars and Night Sky in Discovery Studio</td>
<td>10:00 AM - Noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>MetLife Family Friday Stars and Night Sky in Discovery Studio</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 3:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Chalk the Walk</td>
<td>9:00 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
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**Program calendar subject to changes and additions; visit www.ChildrenMuseum.org for activity details and the most up-to-date information.**
Get Out!
Try hands-on activities in The Children’s Garden on Tuesday afternoons in July and August. Create rockets, make solar prints and sundials, mess around with mud and moon sand, and more!

Wheels at Work
Kids climb aboard a different vehicle each Wednesday morning in July and August. Get behind the wheel of a fire truck, sit atop a backhoe loader, examine the equipment in an ambulance, and more.

Discovery Studio
In celebration of the My Sky exhibit, design constellations, create asteroids, make a sundial and solar warmer, and more in July and August. Discovery Studio is open for self-guided exploration most days from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM; check the website for additional details.

No Time to Waste
Join an interactive family comedy that gives a lighthearted look at the three R’s of protecting the environment – reducing, reusing and recycling. Mondays, July 6 - August 10; shows at 10:30 & 11:30 AM and 12:30 & 1:30 PM.

Play and Learn
This open-ended story-based program is designed to help 2- to 4-year-olds build their skills in a variety of areas and to give parents resources for continuing the learning at home. Try different fun-filled activities each Tuesday morning in September.

Cool Stuff

Friday Night Fun!
Admission is free for kids and grown-ups every Friday evening through Labor Day from 5:00 - 8:00 PM for MetLife Family Friday – Free at Five!

7/10, 7/17, 7/24 & 8/7
Join astronomers from Brown University Science Outreach for Skygazers and experiment with solar telescopes.

8/14
Enjoy “Go Team: The Sports Plays,” hilarious one-act plays created by kids from The Manton Avenue Project. Recommended for ages 6 and up.

7/16 Big Nazo
Mix and mingle with some extraordinarily creative creatures during an interactive puppet demonstration plus cosmic creature dance in The Children’s Garden.

7/18 & 7/19 Bubble Blowout
Use a wide array of wacky tools to build imaginative bubble wands and blowers and experiment with different bubble-blowing techniques.

7/23 Mobiles
Inspired by American sculptor Alexander Calder, explore balance, shapes and color by inventing mobiles from everyday materials.

7/30 Spy Training Camp
Learn how to use secret codes and invisible ink, identify fingerprints, and other tricks and tools needed to become a super spy!

8/8 & 8/9 Stomp Rockets
Use the power of air to blast a rocket high in the sky in The Children’s Garden.

9/13 Happy Grandparents Day!
Admission is free all day for grandmoms and granddads. Children craft cards and collages in Discovery Studio from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

9/18 Celebrate Hispanic Heritage
Join a hands-on workshop exploring the musical traditions of Puerto Rico with Lorena Garay and Lydia Pérez as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. Admission is free from 5:00 - 8:00 PM for MetLife Family Friday.

9/19 Mosaics: Parts and Wholes
Make mosaics with Water Ways muralist Peter Geisser and enjoy stories told in American Sign Language in celebration of Deaf Awareness Month, presented with RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Program sponsors include Amgen Foundation (hands-on science activities), Dominion Foundation (Imagination Playground, No Time to Waste), National Grid (spatial thinking activities) and Providence Tourism Council (Big Nazo).

Most Museum programs are planned to accommodate a wide range of ages and abilities and can easily be adapted or extended. While the calendar recommends specific ages for some programs, older or younger children are welcome to try most activities.
Exploratorium and Chabot Space and Science Center until I was brought on as the exhibit designer for Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose. My favorite exhibit I designed there was Mammoth Discovery—lots of fun problem-solving challenges for a children’s museum, like trying to interpret objects you can’t touch and talking about an animal that’s extinct. It was also a nice surprise to find out that this National Science Foundation-funded project had a learning cohort—a team of museums involved in the exhibit development—and one of those museums was Providence Children’s Museum. It was a treat to hang out with my old team at my new museum.

Now I’m the exhibit designer at Boston Children’s Museum and I was the lead designer for My Sky. I can’t tell you how excited I am that one of my exhibits is coming to Providence. It’s very cool to see my work come full circle like this.

What are some other projects you’re particularly excited about?
Right now I’m designing a photography show for children about a local family with a transgender grandparent. It’s inspired by American Family, an exhibit I designed for the museum in San Jose. I’m working with artist Matthew Clowney and it’s been such a rewarding collaboration. This project is very much in line with the work that I’m most passionate about. I think a lot about all of the different people who come through our doors, and how museums can actively welcome all families. I just spoke at the American Alliance of Museums annual meeting about using design and inclusive language to do just that.

Why do you think museums—children’s museums in particular—are important?
Children’s museums offer experiences for children to see important grown-ups in their lives get excited about the world, and for grown-ups to see the children they love doing the delightful stuff that comes so naturally to them. In a world where children are being assigned homework and studying for standardized tests in kindergarten, child-directed play and free-choice learning is a salve. Children need someone to advocate for their ever-diminishing playtime and grown-ups need some reassurance that, “Hey, look how cool your kid is. You’re a great a parent and your kid is a natural learner. Keep up the good work.” Children’s museums can do both of those things.

What are some of your biggest takeaways from your time at Providence Children’s Museum?
The Museum instilled in me a deep respect for children and a profound appreciation for the power of play. I may not always work in children’s museums, but I know I’ll always be inspired by them.

Research at the Museum
The Museum is collaborating with Brown University on two major National Science Foundation-funded research projects:

**Learning About Learning** (award #1223777)
This spring, the research team investigating how to make kids’ learning through play visible challenged caregivers to capture photos of their children problem-solving while they played at the Museum. Caregivers documented many strategies that children used to solve problems or to accomplish a goal they had set for themselves—watching what others did, collaborating with or helping other children, using trial and error, or systematically experimenting to test different ideas. Many caregivers reported that focusing on problem-solving prompted them to think more about what their children were thinking as they played and to appreciate what kids could figure out on their own.

**Exploring and Explaining** (award #1420548)
Children are naturally curious—they explore with their senses and both seek and generate explanations for why things happen. Exploring and explaining are important aspects of scientific thinking. When exploring, children often experiment to find out how things work and notice when one thing causes another to happen (causal reasoning). When explaining, children articulate what they’ve learned and think about new questions to ask. Caregivers support children’s exploration and learning in many ways—by encouraging, modeling, scaffolding and playing along, and by offering explanations.

In this project, the Museum and Brown are partnering with two other children’s museum/research teams to investigate how open-ended exploration and parent-child interactions in museum settings might support the development of scientific thinking skills like causal reasoning. The teams will also consider how museum educational strategies and exhibit materials can better support children’s exploration and learning. Over the summer, researchers will invite visitors to participate in the project, recording how children and caregivers naturally use different exhibits. Kids will also play short games to help researchers learn about scientific thinking skills develop in young children.

To learn more about these research projects, visit [www.ChildrenMuseum.org/Research.asp](http://www.ChildrenMuseum.org/Research.asp) or the Museum’s blog.
Unplugged Nets $98,700

On May 2, 200 attendees enjoyed a fun-filled evening out and supported the Museum at Unplugged 2015, its annual gala fundraiser. The event raised awareness about the importance of play for kids’ healthy development and honored leaders who exemplify the power of play. It also highlighted Families Together, the Museum’s nationally recognized therapeutic visitation program.

Guests generously contributed $20,900 to help fund critical play and learning opportunities for children and families in need, including the purchase of 20 charitable memberships for low-income families. They also bid nearly $15,500 on 60 live and silent auction items.


Museum Welcomes New Board Members

The Museum held elections to its Board of Directors, honored outstanding volunteers, and celebrated the major milestones of 2014 at its Annual Meeting in April. Newly elected Board members are Pamela High of Lifespan/RI Hospital and Keith Jacobson of Bank of America (pictured above). Peter Gervais of DiSanto Priest, Michael Hogan of TD Wealth Management and Jeffrey Meyer of Neighborhood Health Plan were elected to second Board terms, and Christine Bush of Hinckley Allen and Russell Gross of Lifespan were each elected for an additional year. Christian Lebl-Cote of Collette and Peter Gervais were elected for second terms as Vice President and Treasurer, respectively, and Matthew Littlefield of UBS Financial Services was elected President for an additional year. The Museum also recognized volunteers Debra Albanese, Diane Grenon and Greg Joseph for their remarkable commitment of time and service.

Member Corner

Providence Children’s Museum welcomed 251 new and 198 renewing member families in March, April and May!

Special Offers! Join or renew in July and be entered to win a summer fun gift basket. In August, receive two free admission passes to share with friends. And in September, grandparents receive $10 off memberships during Grandparents Day weekend.

Bring a Friend Members, on Thursday, August 13, bring a friend and his or her family for a FREE day of hands-on fun and a special members’ reception.

Did You Know? Providence Children’s Museum Family PLUS members receive free or discounted reciprocal admission to hundreds of museums nationwide – great for families who travel!

Visit www.ChildrenMuseum.org/Membership.asp to join, renew or gift the gift of play.

32nd Annual

Allen H. Chatterton Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament

Monday, August 3

Register now for the 32nd annual Allen H. Chatterton Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament at Wannamoisett Country Club in Rumford, RI and hit the greens for a fun-filled day of friendly competition, or simply enjoy cocktails and dinner at the clubhouse. All proceeds benefit Providence Children’s Museum’s outreach. Presented by Admirals Bank.

Sponsorships and foursomes are going quickly!

Visit www.ChildrenMuseum.org/Golf.asp or contact Sara Clarke, Clarke@ChildrenMuseum.org or (401) 273-5437 ext. 121 for more information.

Play On!

A Night Out For “Big Kids” Saturday, October 3 • 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Gather your friends for a playful night out at Providence Children’s Museum – no kids allowed! Try creative games and activities, make memories in a funny photo booth, show off your vocal stylings in a karaoke lounge, treat yourself to beverages and food truck fare, and more. Exclusively for ages 21 and up.


Grants & Gifts

of $1,500 or more for non-campaign support received March 10 through June 8, 2015

June Rockwell Levy Foundation

$20,000 for hosting My Sky in Providence

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island

$6,000 (partial) for free NPPI member admission

Anonymous

$5,000 for general operating support

Providence Department of Planning + Development

$4,546 for PopUp Providence

Bank of America

$2,500 for Museums On Us

Hays & Linda Rockwell

$1,500 for general operating support

Leave a Legacy

The Museum welcomes charitable gifts of all sizes. For information, please contact Jennifer Laurelli, Laurelli@ChildrenMuseum.org.

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Change Service Requested

Seeing Stars?
If your address has a star (★) by it, it’s time to renew your membership. Renew before your expiration date and get an extra month FREE!

Try it at home!

Straw Rockets
Ages 5 and up

What You Need

• Ruler
• Pencil
• Plain white paper
• Scissors
• Scotch or masking tape
• Bendable straw
• Paper clips (optional)
• Construction paper (optional)

What You Do

1. Use the ruler, pencil and white paper to draw a rectangle that is two inches by five inches and cut it out with scissors.
2. Create a tube from the paper rectangle by folding the rectangle in half lengthwise and taping the long edge and one short edge closed. Leave the other short edge open.
3. Insert the long end of the bendable straw into the opening in the paper tube.
4. Blow into the straw and send your rocket soaring!

Things to Try

• Add a paperclip to the tip of your rocket and see how the extra weight alters the flight path.
• Bend the straw in different directions. Does this change the way your rocket flies?
• Cut small triangles from construction paper and tape them to the bottom of the tube to create fins for your rocket. How do fins affect the rocket’s flight?

Moon image courtesy NASA/JPL/USGS