



# 2013

# National Medal for Museum and Library Service



**INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES**

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## From the IMLS Director

I am pleased to present the recipients of the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Medal is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums. It celebrates institutions that make a difference for individuals, families, and communities.

This year's honorees exemplify the nation's great diversity of libraries and museums and include a science center, children's museum, music museum, art museum, cultural museum, public libraries, and county library systems, hailing from seven states. Medal winners were selected from scores of nominations from institutions across the country that demonstrate innovative approaches to public service and exceed the expected levels of community outreach.

Earlier this year, 33 institutions were announced as finalists for the National Medal, and community members were encouraged to share stories about their experiences at these institutions on the IMLS Facebook page. We heard from hundreds of people who told us how libraries and museums are educating, inspiring, and leading lifelong learning while serving as community anchors.

Stories like these and more will be captured after the ceremony, when StoryCorps – a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans – will visit each of the Medal winners.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, together with the National Museum and Library Services Board, is proud to congratulate the winners of the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Sincerely,  
Susan H. Hildreth, Director  
Institute of Museum and Library Services



IMLS would like to thank the following for their generous support of the National Medals celebration:



The Institute is proud to partner with



to document stories that demonstrate the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions.

# Boston Children's Museum

Boston, Massachusetts

*"We provide transformational experiences that instill an appreciation of our world, develop foundational skills, and spark a lifelong love of learning."*

– Carole Charnow, President and CEO



## **Celebrating 100 Years of Innovative Education**

Founded in 1913, Boston Children's Museum (BCM) is one of the oldest and largest children's museums in the world. BCM pioneered the concepts of hands-on exhibitions and visitor-focused experiences that put children in charge of their own learning.

Today, the museum is partnering across the community to address school achievement gaps that disproportionately affect Boston's black and Hispanic children and to strengthen science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) academic achievement. And it is expanding its efforts to make the museum as inclusive and accessible as possible.

## **A "Developmental Corridor" for Cognitive Development and School Readiness**

Because early experiences provide a critical foundation for learning, health, and workplace success, the museum developed a series of exhibits comprising a "developmental corridor." *PlaySpace* provides enrichment for children ages three and under, while helping caregivers understand how play is vital to brain development. *Peep's World* helps preschoolers gain skills in observation and experimentation by exploring water, sand, light, and shadow.

*Countdown to Kindergarten* lets families practice going to school in a greatly enriched classroom environment. Trained educators help parents and children learn what to expect at school. Structured school readiness programs launched in 2011 have drawn more than 10,250 participants. Boston Children's Museum and the Department of Early Education and Care disseminate *Countdown* materials, host programs,

and share teaching techniques to children's museums and libraries statewide.

## **A Race to the Top for STEM**

Boston Children's Museum created a multi-media preschool STEM learning kit to help develop curiosity, observation, and experimentation skills. Sponsored by utility company National Grid, the kits are disseminated through 100 agencies in the *Race to the Top* program, along with childcare provider training programs. The museum also created a science play, *It's all in the Cycle*, to tour neighborhoods and schools.

## **Access for All**

A long-time supporter of those with special needs, in 1976 the museum created *What If I Couldn't*, the first exhibit devoted to disability awareness. The museum's *Access/Ability* exhibit uses the newest ideas and technologies available for people with disabilities, touring museums across the U.S. and Canada to reach nearly 1.7 million people. The museum provides assisted listening devices in its KidStage Theater and large print maps for low-vision children and adults and collaborates with Very Special Arts to host its annual celebration.

Boston Children's Museum has also developed programs and resources for children on the autism spectrum. The museum held a private evening event for families with autistic children and produced a guide for afterschool teachers to better integrate the children into their programming. About 1,000 guides are being



**In FY12, 39 percent of the museum's 583,000 visitors took advantage of free or reduced price admission.**

The museum increases community access with free and reduced admission programs, such as:

- half-price library coupons
- \$1/per person Friday night admission, sponsored by Target
- sponsored group visits for low-income schools and community groups

The museum also offers families receiving assistance \$2 admission for up to 4 people. Since fall 2012, over 2,200 people have taken advantage of the discount.

disseminated in staff training workshops and through the state education department.

To make exhibits accessible to families that speak English as a second language, the museum translated *Countdown* exhibit labels, take-home materials, and audiovisual programs into the seven main languages supported in the Boston Public School system.

Boston Children's Museum conducts programs with community agencies to increase familiarity with the museum, such as *DW Counts Down to Kindergarten*, a traveling play performed across Boston to almost 2,500 adults and children. The museum hires diverse staff, including Teen Ambassadors who work both in the museum and the community. Museum staff and Teen Ambassadors sponsored *The Pop-Up Museum* in Roxbury, introducing children to the museum in a neighborhood environment.



#### **Boston Children's Museum**

**Address:** 308 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

**Phone:** (617) 426-6500

**Website:** [www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org)

**President and CEO:** Carole Charnow

**Annual Budget:** \$9.8 million

**Full Time Staff:** 55

**Part Time Staff:** 40

#### **Community Partners**

Action for Boston Community Development Head Start, BNY Mellon, The Boston Foundation, Countdown to Kindergarten, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, The Food Project Farmers' Market, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, MA Cultural Council, MA Department of Early Education and Care, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MIT Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Project HOPE, Thrive in 5

Left: Photo by Paul Spect. Center: *KidsJam* family dance party, photo by Bill Gallery. Right: The museum's new building, featuring the Hood Milk Bottle, photo by Karin Hansen.

# Columbus Museum of Art

## Columbus, Ohio

*"We strive to provide people with opportunities to cultivate and to discover the value of creativity in their own lives. Embracing this idea has allowed us to grow as a museum."*

*– Nannette V. Maciejunes, Executive Director*



### A Creative Vision for Lifelong Learning

Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) strives to redefine the art museum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has earned a reputation as a model for innovative visitor engagement as well as Central Ohio's hub for social, creative, and dynamic experiences. Every exhibit includes "connectors," unique, participatory elements that invite visitors to engage with art and with each other. The museum focuses on creating opportunities to support lifelong learning, while fostering key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

### The Center for Creativity

The Museum's new Center for Creativity (CFC) comprises a philosophy as well as a physical space, celebrating the process and results of creativity and championing new, different ways of thinking and doing. More than 18,000 square feet of space is dedicated to imaginative experiences for visitors of all ages.

CFC is active in developing initiatives to foster creativity and serves as a forum for community efforts. Frequently changing exhibits currently include the *Big Idea Gallery*, allowing visitors to create their own portraits through drawing or a digital photo booth. The *Imagine the Possibilities Wall* building station lets visitors use different materials to build and display their own constructions. The *Wonder Room* is a dynamic environment that combines works of art from the collection with interactive play. The *Community Gallery* displays works by local artists to be bartered for services or goods, while the *Innovation Lab* lets youth experiment with the latest technology.

### Impacting Thinking and Learning

The museum serves thousands of people from more than 30 Ohio counties with a host of programs. Partnering with Columbus City Schools (CCS) led to *ARTful Reading*, a three-part program that focuses on critical thinking skills and ensures all 5,000 fifth-graders visit the museum. The museum hosts an annual *CCS Day for Families*, which drew 4,000 visitors its first year.

*ArtLab* is an intensive, yearlong program for teens. Participants are 75 percent minority and are selected for creative promise and dedication. *ArtLab* mentors foster and model an open environment, using teen interests, curiosity, and challenges as departure points for developing projects and events.

CMA multiplies its impact through programs with and for early learners. *Artful Adventures*, which is designed to foster imagination, uses the permanent collection as a catalyst for discussion and play, letting children picnic with Monet, play blocks with Picasso, and blast into space with Chihuly. CMA partners with Columbus State Community College (CSCC), the second largest trainer of early childhood educators in Ohio. Every CSCC early childhood student visits the museum, learning about the impact of creativity and imagination. *Adventure Out* paired museum teaching artists with preschool teachers to develop imaginative strategies for quality preschool learning.

The museum worked with The Ohio State University Wexner College of Medicine to develop *Art of Analysis*, cultivating better observation skills, communication,





## Free Sundays Demolish Financial Barriers

The Columbus Museum of Art is the only museum in Central Ohio with a free day each week.

Characteristics of free Sunday visitors:

- They are more likely to bring children (2 out of 5 Sunday visitors bring more than one child)
- Nearly 20 percent are African-American (versus 5 percent of visitors on other days)
- 59 percent have household income less than \$75K (versus 48 percent on other days)



empathy, and collaboration in medical students through conversations about art.

*Sparkling Imaginations* pairs Alzheimer's Association Central Ohio Chapter volunteers with a specially trained museum docent to foster meaningful experiences for people with dementia and their caregivers, as imagination is the last cognitive ability lost.



### Columbus Museum of Art

**Address:** 480 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215

**Phone:** (614) 221-6801

**Website:** [www.columbusmuseum.org](http://www.columbusmuseum.org)

**Executive Director:** Nannette V. Maciejunes

**Annual Budget:** \$8,233,963

**Full Time Staff:** 76

**Part Time Staff:** 19

### Community Partners

CATCO, Center of Science and Industry (COSI), Central Ohio Watercolor Society, Columbus College of Art & Design, Columbus Children's Theater, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Fake Bacon Improv, The Ohio State University, TEDxColumbus, TEDxYouth, Thurber House, Wexner Center for the Arts, Wonderland

Left: *Sparkling Imaginations*, photo by Cunningham Charlowe.  
Center: Free Sundays. Right: The museum's West Garden, pictured: Executive Director Nannette V. Maciejunes and Mayor Michael B. Coleman.

## Delta Blues Museum

Clarksdale, Mississippi

*"The museum's programs bring together residents who would never otherwise know one another. The music really does forge community."*

*– Shelley Ritter, Executive Director*



### Serving Coahoma County – and a Global Blues Community

The blues is a vibrant, living, and uniquely American art form with deep roots in Coahoma County, Mississippi, and masterful expression from the artists who lived there. Many consider the distinctive Delta style the most elemental blues form. The Delta Blues Museum celebrates this history, showcases live performances, and nurtures the next generation of blues musicians.

The museum's leaders see it as a vehicle to support the development of the Clarksdale community with shared understanding of blues culture and community history. The museum offers residents pride, opportunity for artistic expression, and enrichment. Coahoma County is largely rural, with the nearest cultural arts hub an hour away. Nearly a third of families and more than 35 percent of individuals live below the poverty line. Museum admission and musical performances are free to residents.

### Learning by Performing, and Performing to Teach

Music classes enroll individuals from every segment of the community. Students range in age from 5 to over 60, from every ethnic and economic background, and from public and private schools. Weekly classes teach history, as well as how to sing and play the blues. Local musicians serve as instructors, and graduates of the program serve as teaching assistants. The students perform as the Delta Blues Museum Band at local events and out-of-town festivals. Last year's students produced a CD, *From Clarksdale to Kansas City: Volume I*, performing with guest blues artists. DBM hosted a

series of workshops on the recording process, from copyright and licensing, to blues harmonica technique, and guitar construction. After that recording, the museum acquired basic production equipment to give students the opportunity to develop engineering and production skills, which they used to create Volume II of the album.

Visitors from across the country and around the world visit Clarksdale because of its ties to musical heroes and opportunities to hear live blues performances by local artists and blues students. They come with a deep love of the music and leave with newfound understanding of blues history and culture.

The museum supports the Juke Joint Festival and Sunflower River Blues, which together bring about 25,000 visitors to Clarksdale each year. The museum provides educational programs in conjunction with the events – and both festivals use its outdoor stage for performances. The museum sponsors a new exhibit during each festival and typically includes the performing artists in its programming.

### Blues on the Road

The museum shares a travelling trunk exhibit with lesson plans, a diddley bow, a guitar, reproduction train memorabilia, and panels that highlight community life in 1940s Clarksdale and Chicago. It disseminates *Keeping the Beat* newsletters to about 10,000 subscribers. The museum's website offers podcasts and videos showcasing history and musical performances. An interactive *Explore and Learn* website series has featured Muddy Waters, Son House, Charlie Musselwhite, and the Robert Johnson "Crossroads"



## Far Reaching Blues

In a typical month, the Delta Blues Museum guest book records visitors from **42 states** and **18 countries**.



legend (in which Johnson supposedly sold his soul in exchange for his extraordinary talent). New features are regularly added to the series.

The museum hosts a reception for area educators annually, providing a museum tour, demonstration of the travelling trunk, and handouts explaining the lesson plans and educational material available on the website.



### Delta Blues Museum

**Address:** #1 Blues Alley, Clarksdale, MS 38614

**Phone:** (662) 627-6820

**Website:** [www.deltabluesmuseum.org](http://www.deltabluesmuseum.org)

**Executive Director:** Shelley Ritter

**Annual Budget:** \$400,000

**Full Time Staff:** 3

**Part Time Staff:** 10

### Community Partners

Arts Center of Cannon County, Carnegie Public Library, Chuck Lamb Photography, Inc., City of Clarksdale, Clarksdale Garden Club, Clarksdale Public Utilities, Clarksdale Municipal School District, Coahoma Community College, Europas Blues Senter, Ground Zero Blues Club, House of Blues, Juke Joint Festival, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, North Delta Museum of Friars Point, Shack Up Inn, Lambfish Gallery, Pinetop Perkins Foundation, Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival, The University of Mississippi School of Law Civil Legal Clinic, and many other service providers.

Left: A few of the museum's historic instruments. Center: Arts and Education students perform on Thacker Mountain Radio Show, a production of Mississippi Public Broadcasting; photo by Greg Livingston. Right: Museum exterior.

# Discovery Science Center

Santa Ana, California

*“Our goal is to create transformational community change through science education and knowledge of the world around us...we realize that the foundation of our success lies in being relevant to our community.”*

*– Joe Adams, President*



## Fun and Meaningful Science Education

With two museums in Orange County and another soon to open in Los Angeles County, Discovery Science Center (DSC) has brought science education to vast audiences over the last 25 years. The DSC team has led the way in innovative museum exhibitions, blending hands-on science activities, immersive environments, game design, and role playing to create state-of-the-art experiences aimed at transforming its community. Patronage of DSC programs has more than tripled over the last decade and in the last year alone its programs impacted over 739,000 visitors and students throughout the Southern California region. In fact, its outreach program in schools is among the largest in the nation.

Along with a strong outreach program, DSC’s professional development programs train more than 600 teachers annually. Its education initiatives are in 650 schools and 27 school districts across Southern California and include 71,000 student field trip visits annually to the Taco Bell Discovery Science Center.

Innovative exhibits captivate visitors of all ages, with varied traveling and temporary exhibits attracting new audiences. Interactive permanent exhibits on topics such as dinosaurs, space exploration, and the science of hockey, provide entertaining but meaningful science education. The *Making-the-Grade* Program focuses on a specific grade level each month with special programs and exhibits that align with the Science Content Standards required of California teachers. Each exhibit collects data to evaluate educational efficacy.

“Our goal is to create transformational community change through science education and knowledge of the world around

us,” said Joe Adams, president of Discovery Science Center. “But we go further by tracking measureable results of change at home and in the schools that we have inspired. These results push us to continue to evolve our hands-on programs and to realize that the foundation of our success lies in being relevant to our community.”

DSC also assists numerous public agencies and youth-development organizations in creating grade-specific classroom and after-school science programs.

## Leader in Environmental Education

Environmental education is vital in California – the state struggles with environmental challenges and has to import most of its water. In 2005, DSC partnered with the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) to create a new approach to community education on water resources, quality, and conservation. Like many water districts, MWDOC views its educational outreach program as a best management practice, but the program had encountered challenges with the changing landscape of science education in California.

In partnership with MWDOC, DSC developed a *Water Education Program* using trained science educators who visit classrooms to teach the science of water systems. The program provided a model for working with water agencies and now DSC’s team provides education programs for water districts, environmental organizations and public agencies throughout Los Angeles, Orange County, and the Inland Empire. These programs serve more than 220,000 students annually through interactive lessons that include hands-on experimentation and activities like testing tap



## Targeting Access

Discovery Science Center is located in Santa Ana partly for accessibility to low-income and minority customers. The area has a large Hispanic population, many low-income families, and the youngest population in the nation among large cities: 46% of residents are 19 or younger.

DSC also caters to visitors with special needs. Exhibits are hands-on, learning is self-paced, and a high staff-to-guest ratio facilitates discovery. Exhibits support visitors with differing learning needs by combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning approaches.



water and urban runoff, as well as visits to local wetlands and treatment plants.

### Immersive Roleplaying Encourages Environmentally Responsible Behavior

In 2011, Orange County sought to partner with DSC's team to change specific behaviors in the community in an effort to limit how quickly landfills were filling up.

Orange County Waste & Recycling and DSC's team created an unprecedented environmental exhibition known as *Eco Challenge*, which places families in interactive environments to help them understand the impacts of personal action. An *Eco Crew* of "green superheroes" model sustainable behavior and inspire young visitors, while three permanent exhibits feature interactive games that teach environmental stewardship. *Eco Challenge* is now a cornerstone of DSC's environmental education. These programs conform to California's K-12 curriculum and include proactive outreach with in-class assemblies, field trips, and professional development workshops for teachers.

In *Discovery Market*, shopping carts feature on-board computers, prompting players to choose products with environmentally friendly packaging. The *Eco Garage* teaches visitors to identify and properly dispose of household hazardous waste found in a typical garage. The *Race to Recycle* teaches participants to sort trash to prevent recyclable and hazardous materials going to landfills.

Left: A guest faces 80 mph winds in the hurricane chamber. Center: Two guests learn the importance of eco-friendly shopping in *Discovery Market*. Right: View of the DSC and *Dino Quest*.



### Discovery Science Center

**Address:** 2500 North Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92705

**Phone:** (714) 913-5039

**Website:** [www.discoverycube.org](http://www.discoverycube.org)

**President:** Joe Adams

**Annual Budget:** \$11,453,539

**Full Time Staff:** 60

**Part Time Staff:** 109

### Community Partners

Bank of America, Boeing, Bolar Hirsch & Jennings LLP, City of Santa Ana, City of Los Angeles, Emulex, First American Financial Corporation, Golden State Water Company, Irvine Ranch Water District, Horowitz Management Inc., Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, Micosemi Corporation, Mission San Juan Capistrano, Municipal Water District of Orange County, Orange County Waste & Recycling, Orange County Water District, Samueli Foundation, Sanderson J. Ray Development, State of California, Taco Bell, Western Digital, Western Municipal Water District, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

## Marshalltown Public Library

Marshalltown, Iowa

*“As the heart of the community, the library can be a pacesetter. If the library is doing something, people pay attention and want to be involved.”*

*–Sarah Rosenblum, Library Director*



### Serving New Americans in the Nation's Heartland

Marshalltown has seen enormous change since its last new library in 1902 and the launch of its 2008 successor. The community strongly supported the early library and the library served its community in innovative ways, opening one of America's earliest children's rooms. Community spirit remains strong – residents formed a five-block “book brigade” to transport collections to the new facility. The library's historic commitment to innovative programs remains equally strong. Today's library collaborates across the community to serve Marshalltown's needs and give new immigrants tools and resources to find jobs, gain literacy skills, succeed in school, and share their cultures.

In the 1970s, Marshall was the seventh wealthiest county in Iowa with a population dominated by European-Americans. Today's immigrants are drawn by moderate cost of living and entry-level jobs. The Marshalltown Community School District is 55 percent minority, with children speaking over 30 languages. The Hispanic community is nearly 25 percent of the population, and immigrants from Myanmar are a growing new community. The library embraces the vitality and cultural diversity of new residents, while providing services and resources to help them – and the community-at-large – thrive.

### Celebrating Diversity; Forging Inclusion

In 2001, the library hosted the state's first *Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros* festival, an annual event that introduces Spanish-speaking families to library services,

while encouraging children of all ethnicities to celebrate Hispanic culture. In 2006, the library responded after immigration enforcement activities at a local plant separated 90 residents from their families. The families needed information and resources to deal with legal issues and lost income. The library provided referrals for legal assistance, Internet access, and other vital information and services.

The library partners with organizations including *Latinas al Exito*, a youth mentoring program for Latinas, to involve youth in library activities, especially its volunteer program, *VolunTeen*. One young woman went on to work for the library and attend college with scholarship help from the library and was selected by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute as one of 12 young Latinas/Latinos to participate in a spring 2013 internship in Washington, D.C.

The library's *EMERGE* program brings every sixth grader to the library once a month during the school year, helping establish relationships and raise awareness about library resources during the pivotal pre-teen period. The library also works with the Intermediate School in an annual *Battle of the Books* for fifth- and sixth-graders, a competition so popular that the high school launched its own “battle.”

*Family Literacy for New Iowans* helps improve the skills of adult family members so they can better support literacy development for the entire family. The program includes family book clubs, support materials, and coordination with adult learning programs sponsored by the local community college.



## Innovative Environmental Sustainability

Incorporating solar energy and the latest technology for effective water management, Marshalltown's new facility was the first newly-constructed library in Iowa to achieve gold designation for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design.

### A Unique Role in Lead Abatement

The Friends of the Marshalltown Library acquired two houses during the library's redevelopment, held in trust for future expansion. They now provide temporary rent-free housing for low-income families whose own homes were found to have lead paint and needed remediation. This support allows more homes to be treated – improving health and cognitive development for vulnerable children.



### Marshalltown Public Library

**Address:** 105 West Boone Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158

**Phone:** (641) 754-5738

**Website:** [www.marshalltownlibrary.org](http://www.marshalltownlibrary.org)

**Library Director:** Sarah W. Rosenblum

**Annual Budget:** \$896,352

**Full Time Staff:** 8

**Part Time Staff:** 10

### Community Partners

Building Healthy Families, Early Childhood Iowa, Iowa Library Services, Iowa Valley Education & Training Center, Latinas al Exito, Marshall County Arts & Culture Alliance, Marshalltown Housing & Community Development, Marshalltown Parks & Recreation Department, Marshalltown Community School District (EMERGE Program, LOL@MHS book club), Mid-Iowa Community Action (Rogers Neighborhood & Head Start), Not In Our Town Anti-Bullying/Anti-Hate Campaign, Salvation Army At-Risk Program, Spread the Words, Read by 3rd Community Literacy Initiative, Workforce Development, YMCA/YWCA

Left: A family celebrates *Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros*. Center: Youth services librarian, Joa LaVille, presents to a group of sixth graders as part of the *EMERGE* monthly visits.

# National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

*It sounds like a cliché, but with vision, focus, strength, and the willingness to fight, you truly can come back better, stronger, and bigger – becoming more than you were.*

*–Gail Naughton, President/CEO*



## Leading Triumph over Disaster

In June 2008, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library was poised to unveil the plans for an expanded facility. It had grown from a tiny foundation formed by descendants of Czech immigrants in 1974 to an internationally recognized institution.

Then the worst disaster in Iowa's history struck, as 10 square miles of Cedar Rapids flooded. Thousands of homes, city buildings, and cultural institutions were damaged or demolished. All museum exhibits were destroyed, library collections were soaked, 15 years of records were lost, and all earned revenue was erased. The museum recorded more than \$11 million in damage, with about 20 percent of its archive and 40 percent of its library collections affected.

## Inspiring Neighborhood Recovery

Long a source of cultural and historical education, the museum took on a new role: leading recovery for its devastated ethnic neighborhood. The Czech Village/ New Bohemia neighborhood saw businesses and homes destroyed and many residents abandoning properties. The board and CEO rededicated the museum to the neighborhood. The museum set a goal to revitalize the area and redevelop the neighborhood as a visitor destination and local attraction.

Museum leaders attended every community meeting and quickly established a public museum presence in a local mall. In 2008, the museum bought a historic flood-damaged neighborhood building as an example of historic preservation and investment. In 2010, this Kosek Building

opened after a \$1.9 million restoration, with an exhibition tracing Czech settlement, the museum's founding, and the flood's impact. The city's only permanent flood-related installation is a community touchstone for remembrance, mourning, and celebrating recovery. The Cedar Rapids Area Convention and Visitors Bureau moved into the building, allowing visitors to tour the flood exhibit at no charge.

The museum included the community at every step of recovery planning, with members invited to participate in decisions about location, design, and other issues. It worked with the city and Iowa legislators to obtain disaster aid to rebuild the city, inspiring generous private donations.

## A New Main Street Community

The museum partnered with Iowa Main Street and the city to launch a new Main Street district through the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program helped raise \$60 million in private investment, adding to government and founding funding. Neighborhood revitalization quickly yielded more than 20 new businesses and nearly 100 new jobs. The museum purchased property threatened with demolition, preserving the historic district's street frontage. It now owns four neighborhood properties and helps lead development of a Strategic Revitalization Plan.

## A Museum Reborn

Because it could not remain on its old site, the museum purchased a nearby lot from the city. NCSML moved the flood-damaged building 480 feet, lifting it onto a new foundation 11 feet above the original elevation, with an





## Before and After

**2008:** 18,000 square feet; 35,000 average attendance; 12 full time staff; \$900,00 annual budget

**2012:** 53,000 square feet; 60,000+ attendance; 18 full time staff; \$1.2 million annual budget



addition tripling its size. It re-opened on July 14, 2012, hosting more than 12,000 visitors at a two-day festival. In just three months, the museum hosted more than 50,000; visitors came from 50 states and 12 foreign countries within six weeks. Neighborhood restaurants and shops were busier than anytime since the flood, with record sales.

The re-opening sparked heavy media coverage and international attention. This success and recognition brings inspiration and excitement to a city struggling to rebuild. Residents take pride in what has been accomplished, and hope for what the city can be.

## National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

**Address:** 1400 Inspiration Place SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

**Phone:** (319) 362-8500

**Website:** [www.ncsml.org](http://www.ncsml.org)

**President/CEO:** Gail Naughton

**Annual Budget:** \$1,120,013

**Full Time Staff:** 18

**Part Time Staff:** 7

## Community Partners

Cedar Rapids Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Cedar Rapids Community School District, Cedar Rapids Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street Program, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Czech Village Association, Federal Emergency Management Agency, The Hall-Perrine Foundation, I-JOBS (Iowa's Infrastructure and Investment Agency), Iowa Public Television, Linn County, Vision Iowa

Left: Dancers at the opening weekend celebration.  
Center: Visitors view award-winning children's book illustrations from the *Biennial of Illustration Bratislava*. Top right: The museum during the 2008 flood. Bottom right: The new museum.

# Pierce County Library System

Tacoma, Washington

*"We listen to our residents, assess community needs, and create alliances to help meet those needs. Our partnerships and connections strengthen our service and communities."*

*– Neel Parikh, Executive Director*



## Research-Informed Services

Pierce County Library System strives to meet the challenges of a diverse community. The library serves a growing youth population, with an increasing number of children receiving free or reduced price lunches. The population of people aged 60 and older is expected to grow 132 percent in the next 20 years. There is a constant influx of new customers from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the West Coast's largest military installation and the largest county employer. The community also is becoming more culturally diverse, with 15 percent of residents speaking Spanish, Korean, or another language other than English at home. With 9 percent unemployment, the county ranks 13th in startups and failures of small businesses nationwide.

The library system embraces two key strategies to best serve their changing community: research to understand customer needs and partnerships to leverage community resources and deliver high-value services.

The library system often tests services during development and implementation through focus groups and public opinion surveys, as well post-implementation assessments. This approach helped make the library system a state leader in early childhood literacy. In 2010-2011, it teamed with the University of Washington iSchool to assess the impacts of giving in-home childcare providers tools and training to prepare children to read. The controlled study found that the literacy skills of children with childcare providers who received training and tools increased by 60 percent, while children in the control group had no significant improvement.

Public opinion research helped launch a new library in Fife, a small industrial city with the most ethnically diverse school district in the state. Understanding community needs led to strong support for a Pierce County library, the first public library in the City of Fife.

Research led the Library System to introduce library services to residents through bookmobiles with Spanish-speaking staff. It also led to the first non-Dewey library in the state, which is instead organized in "bookstore" style for browsing by topic. It was such an immediate success that during the first four hours of operation, 780 people visited, 143 got library cards, and customers checked out 1,566 books and items.

## Partner Powered Programs

The *Early Literacy Program* is a flagship program that involves partnerships with many organizations, including the Health Department and Child Care Aware of Tacoma Pierce County. It provides early literacy training programs for parents and childcare providers. A total of 904 childcare providers and 249 parents participated in 2011. The program now distributes a monthly *Early Learning Newsletter* and learning book boxes to hundreds of childcare centers and home daycare providers. The program has partnered with early learning organizations to reach local colleges and school districts that help parents prepare children for school.

The Library System teamed with the Children's Museum of Tacoma and First 5 FUNdamentals, offering *Play to Learn* programs at libraries, which led to incorporating play components into library storytimes. It then worked with



## Partner Power!

**2009:** Pierce County Library System customers completed 2,400 online job search, resume, and interview classes through e-sources.

**2012:** After partnering with WorkForce Central, e-source sessions rose to 180,000 annually.

First 5 FUNdamentals and Washington Dental Service Foundation to create oral health programs and materials for children who are five years old and younger.

To serve the highly mobile customer base at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the library system created a military website to help families new to the area. The library system worked with the base to provide Job and Business classes and resources to soldiers discharged from the military and to overcome technical barriers to soldiers using their email and base accounts from library computers.

To support job seekers and small business, the library system expanded its job and business resources in all libraries and created dedicated Job and Business Centers in six locations with computers, books, online resume help, job coaches, and knowledgeable librarians. In partnership with WorkForce Central, the Library System uses mobile labs to expand job and business services in rural libraries and offers workshops by employment and business professionals. The Library System offers computer classes and assistance navigating the Library's online e-sources that help people get jobs and start their own businesses.



### Pierce County Library System

**Address:** 3005 112<sup>th</sup> Street East, Tacoma, WA 98446

**Phone:** (253) 548-3300

**Website:** [www.piercecountylibrary.org](http://www.piercecountylibrary.org)

**Executive Director:** Neel Parikh

**Annual Budget:** \$25,423,927

**Full Time Staff:** 132

**Part Time Staff:** 259

### Community Partners

Aging and Disability Resource Center, Alliance for Youth, Centro Latino, Child Care Aware, colleges, Daffodil Festival, First 5 FUNdamentals, friends, foundation, donors, Head Start, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, KBTC Public Television, Korean Women's Association, local governments, museums, The News Tribune, Pierce County Linkages, school districts, Tacoma Community House, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, United Way, University of Washington iSchool, Washington Early Learning Steering Committee, WorkForce Central, WorkSource, and many more.

All photos by Chris Tumbusch.

# Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

Cincinnati, Ohio

*"Making a major community impact boils down to partnering and collaborating; we have a shared mission – we are so much stronger when we work together."*

– Kimber L. Fender, Eva Jane Romaine  
Coombe Director



## Serving Diverse, High-Demand Communities

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County serves 49 separate jurisdictions that are economically, educationally, and ethnically diverse.

The library is one of the largest, oldest, and most heavily used in America. With 17.6 million items borrowed in 2011, it is the eighth busiest library in the country.

## Promoting Academic Success and Lifelong Learning

Cincinnati is the library's single largest jurisdiction, with critical educational needs: it has the third highest rate of childhood poverty (48 percent) in the nation, and 20 branches serving communities where fewer than 80 percent of children read at grade level.

The library participates in *Read On!*, a regional initiative involving more than 70 organizations. It provides tutoring at 18 Cincinnati Public Schools in partnership with community organizations. The library also teams with Read Aloud to raise awareness of the importance of reading to children in developing literacy.

## Foundations for Success

The library's children programs target three factors that are critical to academic success: kindergarten readiness, school attendance, and preventing summer learning loss.

As a partner in the United Way's *Success by 6*

program, the library teaches parents, caregivers, and preschool instructors to use the technique of shared reading with preschool children, to help them develop key pre-literacy skills for kindergarten readiness. *Early Learning Express* visits childcare providers to teach shared reading and provide books and manipulatives, and children's librarians use shared reading during storytime.

The library takes a proactive approach to school truancy. If staff members see children in the library during school hours, they determine which school they attend, review the school calendar, and contact the school.

Lack of supplemental summer educational activities often sets low-income children significantly behind their classmates. Two library programs help prevent summer reading loss: summer reading and *Brain Camps*, which provide intensive week-long or three-day enriching experiences to families who can't afford other programs. The library also installed *AfterSchool Edge* stations for 12 branch libraries to help reduce summer learning loss in math.

## Community-Wide Access to Lifelong Learning

The library established an Adult Learning Center that provides help with literacy and math skills, online job applications, and GED preparation. The Online Learning Center provides a one-stop shop to access these learning resources online.

In addition, the library is extremely active



## Targeting Optimal Utilization

The library analyzed user information to define needs and identify ten cardholder clusters. It chose to focus on three groups: Rising Stars are teens who use the library heavily, providing opportunity to retain cardholders often lost as they mature; Wave Riders are early adopters of digital content, who can help develop new, innovative services; and Occasionals, who visit only three or four times a year, offer the best opportunity to improve customer service.

in outreach, providing collections and services to incarceration facilities, homebound individuals, senior centers, and homeschoolers, as well as classrooms across the county.



### **Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County**

**Address:** 800 Vine Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

**Phone:** (513) 369-6900

**Website:** [www.CincinnatiLibrary.org](http://www.CincinnatiLibrary.org)

**Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director:** Kimber L. Fender

**Annual Budget:** \$62,024,860

**Full Time Staff:** 466

**Part Time Staff:** 300

### **Community Partners**

Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati Recreation Commission, The Cincinnati Reds, Downtown Cincinnati Inc., The Freestore Foodbank, Hamilton County Genealogical Society, Hamilton County School Districts, Library of Congress, ReadAloud, Strive Partnership, Success by 6, University of Cincinnati Libraries

Left: Two girls view the Teenspace website.

Center: Visitors tour the *Preservation Lab*, a joint project with the University of Cincinnati Libraries.

Right: The Main Library branch in downtown Cincinnati.

## Rancho Cucamonga Public Library

Rancho Cucamonga, California

*"Business icon Peter Drucker said, 'The best way to predict the future is to create it.' That thought is a touchstone for us: being innovative is essential to keep the library moving forward to the future."*

*– Robert Karatsu, Library Director*



### Blending Cultural Vitality with Vital Education

The Rancho Cucamonga Public Library serves a highly diverse community (35 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian, and 9 percent black), in one of California's fastest growing areas. The library incorporates rich cultural programming, while maintaining a strong focus on family and multi-generational involvement. It strives to develop innovative, participatory programs that serve the community and can be shared and replicated by other libraries.

Thematic program series such as *Cultural Arts Nights* for Black History Month, Chinese New Year, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Local History, showcase culture through music, dance, literature, performance, arts, and crafts to large audiences of 500 to 800 people.

The library partners with the community theater to present *From the Page to the Stage*, events and curriculum packets that enhance theatrical performances of classic children's literature. It partnered with the city to create *Local History 2.0*, digital stories to preserve and share the community's heritage.

The library sponsors an array of children's programs, such as *Back 2 Basics* after-school tutoring for children reading below grade level, which graduates 100 children annually. A *Robotics Workshop* for young children uses robot kits to foster interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Along with special events including *Star Wars Day* and *School Family Nights*, the library provides 18 weekly programs including infant activity time, after-school storytime, and pajama storytime

for the entire family. Teens enjoy book clubs, crafts, tech game nights, and programs informed by a local teen advisory group. The group's input inspired a *Careers in the Real World* series presented to more than 200 local high school students.

The library is also dedicated to adult needs. Job search and professional development requests have tripled over the past few years. The library increased computer classes to 10 per month, including business software instruction. The library partnered with seven neighboring jurisdictions to present on-site job search and resume classes at annual job fairs that attract 1,500 – 2,000 participants. Many job seekers later visit the library to polish technical skills, get more training, and use job-search resources.

### Play and Learn Islands: a Portable Approach to Interactive Learning

A 2009 needs assessment revealed public desire for interactive, engaging exhibits, blending the best of libraries and children's museums. As an interim step, the library worked with an exhibit designer to develop small-scale exhibits that introduce play into libraries. *Play and Learn Islands™* (PALs) feature interactive elements and books to help children develop problem solving, reading and writing, spatial relations, motor, collaboration, and creative skills. The library's PALs are extremely popular, used by thousands of children and families yearly. The library introduced PALs at state and national library conferences and loaned PALs at no cost to 35 California library jurisdictions. The library has partnered with CALIFA, a library cooperative



## Taking the Library to the Community

The library partners with many city departments, such as:

- Community Services, offering programs, materials, and services in the senior center, resource center, and during the Founders Day parade and other community events
- Planning and Fire, creating the “Portal to the Past” local history website
- Healthy RC, as part of the core team to grow the *Healthy Mind, Body, and Earth* initiative
- Engineering Department, working to create programming around sustainability and working with the Municipal Utility to create a Renewable Energy *Play and Learn Island™*

organization, to sell PALs to other libraries nationwide. The library also rents PALs to local organizations such as child development centers.

### Library Staff Development

The library strongly believes in staff development and capacity building, and as a result created (through an LSTA grant from the California State Library) the *Staff Innovation Fund™* (SIF) that combines training in project management, leadership, grants, communication, and more with a competitive grant program to put skills into practice. Upon completion of this project, seven libraries in California began a pilot SIF in their libraries, with several more slated for the next few months.



### Rancho Cucamonga Public Library

**Address:** 7368 Archibald Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

**Phone:** (909) 477-2720

**Website:** [www.rcpl.lib.ca.us](http://www.rcpl.lib.ca.us)

**Library Director:** Robert Karatsu

**Annual Budget:** \$3.9 million

**Full Time Staff:** 25

**Part Time Staff:** 45

### Community Partners

Alta Loma, Central, Cucamonga, and Etiwanda School Districts, The Califa Library Group, California State Library, Etiwanda High School VEX Robotics, Historical Preservation Association of Rancho Cucamonga, Infopeople, Inland Empire Fan Force, Lewis Operating Corporation, Rancho Cucamonga Friends of the Library, Rancho Cucamonga Public Library Foundation, Rancho Cucamonga Community Services, Rancho Cucamonga Fire District, Rancho Cucamonga Planning Department, Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Utility, Rancho Cucamonga Animal care and Adoption Center, Victoria Gardens, Whittier Public Library

Left: Children at the *Play and Learn Islands*. Center: Children's Services Librarian Angelica Trummell entertaining a large crowd at story time. Right: The library prepares for a *Cultural Arts Night*.

# Waukegan Public Library

## Waukegan, Illinois

*"We develop relevant programs, based on community needs, using very limited resources. We utilize best practices from other fields to create strategies that are easily replicated and very effective."*

*– Elizabeth Stearns, Assistant Director  
of Community Services*



### **An Inclusive Ladder to Literacy**

The Waukegan Public Library (WPL) recognized a critical need for fresh, effective approaches to promoting literacy across the community. Waukegan has a Hispanic population three times higher than the state average, with 55 percent of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Twenty percent speak do not speak English and another 25 percent are not fluent. Facing enormous language challenges, half of Waukegan's high school freshmen have fifth- or sixth-grade reading and math levels. A third drop out of school – more than double the state average. Adults are also heavily impacted: 189,000 Lake County adults don't have a diploma or GED, and 13 percent can't sign their names or locate the expiration date on a driver's license in English or Spanish.

The library has evolved as a core component of Waukegan's broader community learning and service infrastructure. It sponsors a wide array of programs as a *Path to Literacy and Learning*, providing residents with skills such as functional literacy and the ability to read in Spanish as building blocks to mastering English language and reading skills and attaining further education. The library provides essential services and materials that residents could not otherwise afford, including education and job resources, computers and Internet access, special programs, books, movies, music, and more.

### **Cultivating Community Understanding with Ambassadors**

Waukegan Public Library teamed with Lake County United, drawing on its community organizing expertise to help staff

collect public input on programming decisions. The library launched a *Community Conversation Corps*, and conducted nearly 1,000 interviews with a representative sample across the community. The resulting data helped the library develop education for customers of all ages and economic strata.

The library reaches out to early learners with *Early Learning Camps*, *Interactive Family Learning*, *Play Times*, *Storytimes*, and a hands-on learning museum in the Children's Department based on a rotating theme. It targets children in grades 2-8 with a wide range of reading, cultural, and academic programs, and adds tutoring, computer classes, and job search assistance for youth who are high school age and above. It also provides a continuum of learning for adults, recognizing that family literacy is vital to gaining and sustaining improvements in school readiness for children and academic success for young learners.

One key initiative is the *Promotoras Ambassador Program*. A Promotora is an outreach worker responsible for raising awareness of educational issues. The library's Promotoras were given training and technology to help reach out to the community. They established two-way communication, finding out what residents wanted and needed and helping the community understand available resources and programs.

One result is WPL's student-focused, culturally sensitive *Conversational ESL Program*. In the first year, 255 people participated, with eight quickly promoted and 179 going on to traditional ESL or GED classes. Each class focuses on issues identified by students, such as making a doctor's appointment, job hunting, shopping, or parent-teacher conferences. Learning is reinforced through the *Leamos*





## Functional Literacy as a Life Saver

After having participated in WPL's *Conversational ESL Program*, a young Hispanic mother heard her children shouting outside in the yard. If it wasn't for the classes at the library, she would never have recognized the word "fire" or know to dial 911 for help. Emergency responders arrived in time to prevent injuries – or worse.

*Spanish Literacy Program*, a web-based, self-paced course that teaches language structure as a first step to learning beyond basic reading and writing. The library is about to launch a new program to teach Spanish speakers about the current health care options that may be available to them, connect them with a primary health care provider, and educate them on when and when not to seek hospital emergency care.

WPL also partners with the College of Lake County and other community organizations to offer a wide range of adult programs, including traditional ESL and GED classes, tutoring, a citizenship preparation, and free consultations with social workers at the Library.



### Waukegan Public Library

**Address:** 128 N. County Street, Waukegan, IL 60085

**Phone:** (847) 623-2041

**Website:** [www.waukeganpl.org](http://www.waukeganpl.org)

**Executive Director:** Richard Lee

**Annual Budget:** \$4,079,658

**Full Time Staff:** 34

**Part Time Staff:** 28

### Community Partners

Chicago Wilderness, Church of the Holy Spirit, Coalicion Latinos Unidos de Lake County, College of Lake County, Gorter Family Foundation, Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison Family Foundation, Hispanic American Community Education & Services, Inc., Lake County Alliance for Human Services, Lake County United, Literacy Volunteers of Lake County, Most Blessed Trinity Parent School and Father Gary Graf Center, North Shore Gas, United Way of Lake County, Waukegan Public School District and Welcome Center

Left: Conversational English Class. Center: Annual *Monarch Festival* attendees learn about the environment and healthy living. Right: Northeast entrance of the Waukegan Public Library building.

## National Medal Finalists

This year, 33 institutions were named Finalists for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, a first in the program's history. Diverse institutions including an urban art museum, small town local library, children's museums, regional library systems, community gardens, and more, from California to Connecticut, Minnesota to Louisiana, were among the honorees. Eight Finalists participate in the *Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* initiative. Through the *Share Your Story* initiative, thousands of community members highlighted ways Finalist institutions impacted and changed their lives for the better.

Congratulations to the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service Finalists.

Amazement Square, Lynchburg, Virginia\*  
Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas  
Bell Whittington Public Library, Portland, Texas  
California Digital Library, University of California, Oakland, California  
Chesterfield County Public Library, Chesterfield County, Virginia  
Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cuyahoga County, Ohio  
Hartford Public Library, Hartford, Connecticut  
Jefferson County Public Library, Lakewood, Colorado  
King County Library System, Issaquah, Washington  
Minnesota Children's Museum, St. Paul, Minnesota\*  
Museum of Discovery, Little Rock, Arkansas\*  
New York Historical Society, New York, New York  
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, North Carolina\*  
Omaha Children's Museum, Omaha, Nebraska\*  
Omaha Public Library, Omaha, Nebraska  
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania\*  
Santa Ana Public Library, Santa Ana, California  
Terrebonne Parish Library System, Houma, Louisiana  
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland  
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut\*  
Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg, Virginia  
Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, Connecticut\*

\* *Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* participants.  
Visit [www.ims.gov/letsmove](http://www.ims.gov/letsmove) to learn more  
about this initiative.



# About the National Museum and Library Services Board

The National Museum and Library Services Board advises the Institute's director on selections for the National Medals. This Board is an advisory body that includes Presidentially appointed individuals with expertise in, or commitment to, library, museum, and information services. Informed by its collectively vast experience and knowledge, the Board also advises the Institute's director on general policy, practices, and coordination with other federal agencies and offices.

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# About the National Medal

Since 1994, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service has honored outstanding institutions, 65 museums and 47 libraries, that have made significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Selected institutions demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The winners are selected by the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in consultation with the National Museum and Library Services Board. Winners are honored at a National Medal award ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

Beginning with the 2009 awardees, personal stories demonstrating the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions are being documented through a cooperative agreement between IMLS and StoryCorps, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



# About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



