

ABSTRACT  
Museums and Social Change: Supporting Community Needs Equals Stronger Partnerships

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As museums seek to demonstrate public value by reaching a more diverse and often underserved audience, they are creating partnerships and programs designed to support community needs. This project focuses on a partnership formed between the Mayborn Museum Complex (MMC) at Baylor University in Waco, TX, and the Greater Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program (BPRP), a literacy organization that aims to improve reading skills of local students. The purpose of the partnership was to support the goals of a community organization by offering special learning opportunities in the museum.

This project sought to support goals of the BPRP through two visits to the MMC, where students and volunteers in the program participated in educational activities designed to foster four goals, including providing opportunities for informal assessment of reading skills. Observations, in-person interviews and online surveys with BPRP volunteers provided feedback to design each visit, and to evaluate whether the goals of the partnership were met. This project includes a brief literature review of the history of museums and community involvement, including the attempts of museum leaders to broaden the role of museums in society by providing direct services to their communities.

The results of the project provide recommendations to the MMC, and other museums, that will facilitate future partnerships to meet community needs. This project demonstrates the benefits of such partnerships, and identifies the challenges in creating and sustaining them.

Museums and Social Change: Supporting Community Needs Equals Stronger Partnerships

by

Allison Hewlett, B.A.

A Project

Approved by the Department of Museum Studies

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of the Degree

Of

Master of Arts

Approved by the Project Committee

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my parents, who have always supported all of my plans and projects wholeheartedly, especially this one. I am unbelievably grateful to have such wonderful, loving parents.

And also, to the students of J.H. Hines Elementary School.

I hope they continue to love museums as much as I do.

## INTRODUCTION

Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century face a difficult task of balancing priorities among collections, education, audience development, and most of all, community building, which was largely ignored as a function of museums until recent decades. Building strong relationships with local communities allow museums to meet mission related goals, and support community needs. Additionally, strong community relationships allow museums to maintain current audiences as they change, attract new audiences, and demonstrate relevance of the museum to the community. The range of current community programs is vast, as some museums do little to support direct community needs, while others expand their mission to include this type of support. The role of museums in community has evolved over time, and will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of society.

### Rationale

I became interested in learning about museums and social change after participating in a partnership program through my graduate assistantship in education at the Mayborn Museum Complex (MMC) in Waco, TX. The MMC partnered with the Waco Family Abuse Center to create informal programming for children who were staying at the center. Goals of the program were to provide the children with a safe place to play, to provide their mothers with a break to attending counseling services, and to discuss issues relevant to the children as they stayed in the shelter and struggled through a difficult phase. The children came to the museum to participate in the program four

times. They were invited to play in specific Discovery Rooms of the Mayborn Museum Complex, and the MMC staff talked with the children on themes like getting along, community living, being away from home, and diversity.

I saw the potential in this project for museums to create life changing programs beyond the typical educational programs for adults and school groups. The project could examine whether museums can serve as a resource used to improve the quality of human lives to a much greater degree. After witnessing this phenomenon of using museums to meet human needs first hand, I decided to find another need in the community of Waco where the Mayborn Museum Complex could make a difference by supporting community goals. A partnership with the Greater Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program was formed to help meet the needs in the community by supporting the Alliance's goals, and so that I could experience the process of forming a partnership on my own.

This partnership seemed ideal and mutually beneficial for both organizations. In Waco, the Mayborn Museum Complex is a well-known and popular resource for local children and families, with an emphasis on learning in a fun, interactive way. However, over 40% of families in Waco live below the poverty line, and as a result are not likely to visit the museum on a regular basis. Literacy skills are directly correlated to success in school and in adulthood, which is why supporting failing students to improve their reading skills is vital to ending the cycle of poverty. The resources of the Mayborn Museum Complex—objects, labels and reading material, and a safe environment—provided the type of support needed by the Best Practices Reading Program to help them achieve their goals. The Mayborn Museum Complex also benefited through this

partnership by fulfilling its mission to reach an underserved audience, becoming even more relevant to the community and making a difference in the lives of these children.

## Methodology

In order to explore how museums can meet community goals to spark social change, I sought to form a partnership between Baylor University's Sue and Frank Mayborn Museum of Natural Science and Cultural History Complex and a non-profit organization serving the needs of citizens in Waco. The Greater Waco Education Alliance (GWEA) was an ideal fit for this project, as this organization had previously identified needs in the local community to improve the quality of education for all students, in order to improve the chances for children to break out of the cycle of poverty. The GWEA's Best Practices Reading Program was created to assist all students in Waco read on grade level by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The Greater Waco Education Alliance agreed to work with me as I created an educational experience using the resources of the Mayborn Museum Complex. The museum experiences were designed to support the objectives of the Greater Waco Education Alliances in four ways: to provide opportunities for BPRP volunteers to informally evaluate students' reading skills, to nurture relationships and strengthen bonds between adult volunteers and students, to reward students for improvement and motivate them to continue to read, and to facilitate a love for learning in museums and positively influence learning attitudes.

To accomplish these goals, I conducted a series of interviews and online surveys with the adults who volunteer with the Best Practices Reading Program, and planned two

museum experiences for the students in the program to visit the Mayborn Museum Complex.

I interviewed the adult volunteers prior to the trip to the MMC to learn about the student's level of improvement with the Best Practices Reading Program, reading habits and learning behaviors, and their level of excitement regarding the upcoming museum visit. The volunteers' opinions were invaluable, as they worked directly with the children and could monitor their progress. This project was approved through the Institutional Review Board to interview the volunteers rather than the students, in order to protect student anonymity, and gather information about students' attitudes and progress that an outside observer (the adult volunteer reading partners) could more objectively identify.

With this information, I planned the first museum experience to provide opportunities for the volunteers to informally evaluate students' sight word recognition and reading comprehension through a clue-finding activity. The student and his or her volunteer worked together to complete the educational activity. In addition to observations of the students during their experience at the museum, I also used an online survey after the first field trip, which enabled the adult volunteers to help me assess the student's level of comfort with the museum, and the effectiveness of the educational clue-finding activity. From this feedback, I developed the educational activity for the second visit to the Mayborn Museum.

I organized the second field trip to the Mayborn Museum to build upon the goals and activities of the first visit, by challenging the students with a writing composition activity. Students were asked to compose label text for their favorite artifacts in the museum, with help from the adult volunteers, to enhance reading comprehension and

evaluate writing skills. After the second field trip, an online survey provided feedback from volunteers, again helping to evaluate the goals of the partnership and receive feedback.

Free passes were distributed to the students after each field trip, permitting them to return to the MMC with their families. Passes were distributed as a way to assess whether the children wanted to return and the museum's perceived value by the community.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since their inception, American museums have attempted to demonstrate public value to their communities through programs, partnerships, and exhibitions to some degree or another. The public value of museums is already recognized through their educational missions and a consensus that the existence of museums benefits society, as noted by Mary Ellen Munley, former chair of the American Association of Museum's Committee on Education and co-author of *Museums for a New Century* (Munley 2010, 23). However, the larger portion of the community that embraces and utilizes museums, the greater their public value will be. To assess the most effective way museums can benefit communities and serve as agents of social change by enhancing their current efforts, this brief literature review looks to the history of museums and community involvement, and the ideas of leaders in the museum field addressing the capabilities of museums as agents of social change.

Initially, museums were created to house and preserve personal and research collections. For centuries, cabinets of curiosities, personal collections, and even university collections were reserved for viewing by academics and society's elite (Alexander and Alexander 2007, 5). The existence of museums impacted a small portion of the general population, as audiences were purposefully limited. Many American museums were created in the mindset of sharing collections with the public, like Charles Willson Peale's museum, which opened in 1782, housed first at Peale's home and later at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Genoways and Andrei 2008, 330),

much in part due to the democratic ideals on which America was founded (Bloom et al. 1984, 55) .

However, while museum audiences gradually expanded, the public served in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was still relatively elite and limited to specific populations due to limited museum hours, admission fees, and literacy skills. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art offered extended hours for working classes to visit the museum, but this was the exception rather than the rule. Gradually museums opened their doors to wider, more diverse populations, but collecting and preserving objects remained the focus well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Silverman 2010, 8-9). Museums traditionally focused inwardly on collections rather than outwardly on the audience or prospective audience, which limited the possibilities for museums to build relationships with communities.

Some early museum leaders, like John Cotton Dana, believed that museums could act as great resources to communities. Dana founded the Newark Museum with working class people in mind, but thought that most museums were mired in elitism. He wrote in 1927 that the “best imaginings of museum enthusiasts have not yet set before us a clear picture of a museum of rich and full utility” (Dana 1999, 133). He saw greater potential for museums beyond acting as collecting, or even educational institutions, and believed that they could be used to better society (Hirzy 2002, 12), as Dana once wrote: “A museum is good only in so far as it is of use” (Dierking 2010, 10). Dana was an early champion for the value of museum education and equality, radical ideas at a time when museums were inwardly focused, not concerned with audience development.

Dana and his contemporaries, and those who followed, demonstrated their strong beliefs that museums should serve communities through the innovative programs and changes, particularly in the field of education, at their institutions. Henry Watson Kent, during his long career at institutions like the Norwich Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1905 to 1940, created programs to attract repeat visitors from both foreign places and local communities, introduced chairs in the museum gallery so visitors could stay longer without tiring, and created special programs for disabled visitors (Alexander 1997, 61-66). These programs considered the needs of the visitor in order to create positive museum experiences and to allow new groups to visit museums.

Anna Billings Gallup began her museum career in 1902 as an educator at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and eventually served as director until 1937. Gallup expanded her early role as an educator to truly relate to her young patrons. Gallup created exhibits at children's height to make the atmosphere more welcoming, and said:

A museum can do the greatest good and furnish the most effective help to the boys and girls who love it as an institution, who take pride in its work for them and with them, and who delight in their association with it...to inspire children with this love and pride in the institution, they must feel that it is created, and now exists for them, and that in all of its plans it puts the child first (Alexander 1997, 140).

She believed that for her audience, primarily children, to take ownership in the museum, the museum must offer something special for them in return, and prioritize their needs above all else. Many museums today have adopted this attitude, and create programs for specific populations.

Arthur C. Parker, founder of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences (and its director from 1924 to 1945), believed that visitors should always remain the museum's top priority. In addition to his close involvement with Native Americans, and his notoriety for creating the first museum dioramas while at the American Museum of Natural History, Parker was influential in the museum field for promoting hands-on learning and prioritizing the visitor, which was unusual for the time. Parker believed that museums should base exhibits and programs around the needs and wants of the audience, because without the audience, the museum has no true reason for existing (Schwarzer 2006, 175).

While these pioneers made great efforts to improve the quality of education in museums and meet visitor needs, the rest of the museum field was not entirely convinced that education should serve as a function of museums. Benjamin Ives Gilman, secretary of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from 1893 to 1925, was one of many in the field who staunchly opposed the idea of museums as educational institutions for the masses. He viewed art museums as important for aesthetic value, not educational content, as he once wrote, "...a museum of fine art is not didactic but aesthetic in primary purpose, although formative in its influence, and both admitting of and profiting by a secondary pedagogical use. The true conception of an art museum is not that of an education institution having art for its teaching material" (Gilman 2008, 136). Gradually, museums embraced education as a function, but not without challenges from dissidents like Gilman.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, American museums began to shift from an inward focus on collections to an outward focus on the museum audience, made possible by visionaries

like Gallup, Kent and Dana, with increased program offerings to a wider public. As demand increased, funding was needed to create and expand education programming. In 1969, the American Association of Museums (AAM) wrote *The Belmont Report*, asking the United States Congress for increased federal support of museums in order to preserve American's treasures, and demonstrated the worth of museums by citing their research and educational benefits (Schwarzer 2006, 193-194). This new, formal recognition of museums' abilities to provide services to benefit the public led to an increased, outward focus on museum audiences and public educational programming.

As museums shifted toward a stronger focus on developing greater and more diverse audiences, the importance of educational programming became obvious, and in 1973 AAM created the Committee on Education (EdCom). Many early leaders in the field of museum studies, like John Cotton Dana, had acknowledged the importance of meeting audience needs, but the field as a whole had not fully recognized visitors and the educational function of museums until the creation of EdCom and the many groundbreaking publications that followed.

As the American Association of Museums prepared for changes in the field, they sought to identify and make recommendations for museums to improve in the future. *Museums for a New Century*, published in 1984, formally recognized the importance of education as a primary function of museums. Prior to this publication, the museum field had not reached a consensus about the extent to which museums could or should reach out to educate audience, and audiences did not always view museums as educational institutions. Formal research on the topic was required to understand how people could learn best in museums (Bloom et al. 1984, 56-70). The AAM made the decision to

formally recognize education as a function of museums to eliminate confusion and to serve a larger purpose in the future, through their Fifth Recommendation in *Museums for a New Century*:

Education is a primary purpose of the American museum. To assure that the educational function is integrated into all museum activities, museums need to look carefully at their internal operational structures. Collaborative approaches to public programs that include educational as well as scholarly and exhibition components facilitate achieving the full educational mission of museums (Bloom et al. 1984, 63).

In 1992, AAM published the ground breaking *Excellence and Equity* to encourage museums to incorporate education at the center of their missions as a means of public service, become inclusive and welcome more diverse audiences. These goals are necessary for museums, as “Some members of the public feel that museums have no relevance to their lives. Some people do not feel welcome in museums; others visit museums only to leave feeling inadequate. Only a few understand the whole spectrum of museums as educational institutions” (Hirzy 1991, 14). *Excellence and Equity* encouraged museums to become more collaborative and work with outside organizations to support communities:

Museums cannot operate in isolation in a world of shifting boundaries. Collaboration today has expanded possibilities for ensuring that museums use their collections, programs, and resources effectively. It is a way to invite more participation from outside the museum in shaping ideas and making decisions to augment the personal experience and professional expertise of the museums staff (Hirzy 1991, 21).

Through a series of Museums and Community Events, AAM compiled input from museum leaders and community members to write *Mastering Civic Engagement* in 2001—a call to action for museums to support communities, which identifies ways museums can actively seek partnerships with community organizations (Hirzy 2002, 9). A museum should recognize that it is just part of the solution to building community, and that it must work with new organizations (Jackson 2002, 37). While standards and expectations for museums change over time, AAM has identified goals that museums should strive to reach, including proper care of collections and financial stability. In 2004, AAM added a new standard to the list—Public Trust and Accountability. The publication released on the topic in 2008, *National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums*, includes service to local communities as imperative for museums to meet the standard of Public Trust and Accountability, and for creating broader audiences (Merritt 2008). Elizabeth Merritt, author of the publication, argues that museums can also benefit by reaching out to local communities:

Being involved with your community may lead to your neighbors becoming visitors to your museum. It may build mutually beneficial partnerships with local businesses. It can connect you with people and foundations interested in supporting your museum as much because of your effect n the community as because of belief in your mission (though they may come to care about that, too) (Merritt 2008, 20-21).

This formal recognition of the museum’s role in community by AAM is supported by leaders in the field, and has identified the shift from an inward to an outward focus.

The International Council on Museum (ICOM) defines a museum as a “non-profit, *permanent institution in the service of society and of its development*, open to the

public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environments” (International Council on Museums 2010). Not only does ICOM’s definition of a museum include a commitment to serve society, but this organization also strongly encourages that museums prioritize community collaboration (Johnson et al. 2009).

New questions arose about what museums should do to benefit audiences as museums moved from an inward focus to an outward focus. How could they preserve collections and still use these collections to benefit people, and how could they prove their relevance and justify their existence? These questions are addressed in many different ways by the museum field today, particularly when it comes to public service. While many institutions have aimed to help communities over time in small ways, museums today are realizing that they must go beyond these efforts and accept social responsibility. They must support community goals directly through their public programs and become vital parts of communities to most effectively share their collections. Museum leaders like Stephen Weil of the Smithsonian Institution, museum consultant and former Deputy Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Elaine Gurian, John Falk and Lynn Dierking, co-authors of *The Museum Experience*, and Lois Silverman, author of *The Social Work of Museums*, support and expand upon suggestions of professional organizations like AAM and ICOM that museums should support communities, embrace their mission, look into the community, and see where the museum can make a maximum impact with its resources.

The literature demonstrates a vast range of opinions on why and how museums can support communities. Lynn Dierking has stated that proving public value has grown

in priority to society in recent years due to the struggling economy, and struggling nonprofits, like museums, must demonstrate value to attain funds (Dierking 2010, 9). If the museum becomes integrated within the community, its survival is more likely. During tough economic times “the right thing to do is ask how museums can help communities, not save themselves” (Dierking 2010, 13).

Lois Silverman describes this movement as the social work of museums, and identifies the creation of public museums, traveling exhibits and neighborhood museums as examples of museums meeting various human needs to improve lives, by strengthening relationships and developing valuable skills (Silverman 2010, 5). From Stephen Weil proclaiming that museums must move beyond “being about something to being for someone” (Weil 2007, 229-258), to Elaine Gurian’s suggestion that all museums should waive admission fees, scholarly opinion supports the function of museums to serve communities (Gurian 2005); however, to what extent museums should support community is up for debate. Gurian acknowledges the danger that museums might attempt to do too much, overstepping institutional bounds, so that the institution might lose sight of their original purpose; on the other hand, many museums do little to help communities beyond opening their doors (Gurian 2005).

Falk and Dierking wrote that the value of a museum is no longer measured by size or worth of collection, but rather by the impact the museum has on the community (Falk and Dierking 2008, 233). The degree of impact a museum can have on a community varies, but museums should strive to do as much as realistically possible. To determine what actions are realistic for any given museum, the field can look to three models identified by Richard Sandell, Director of the Museum Studies Department at the

University of Leicester and editor of *Museums, Society, and Inequality*, which combine the ideas of other museum leaders into increasingly involved categories.

Sandell identifies three models of socially responsible museums—the socially inclusive museum, the museum as agent of social regeneration, and the museum as a vehicle for broad social change (Sandell 1998). Each model offers increasingly involved ways museums can help communities. What works for one institution may not be possible at another.

The socially inclusive museum removes barriers (whether financial, physical, or psychological) for specific populations so that they are more likely to visit a museum. For example, monthly “Free Sunday” programs offered by many museums across America remove the financial barrier so populations of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to visit. Falk and Dierking suggest removing intimidating barriers, like stern security guards, to make the visitor feel welcome (Falk and Dierking 1992). In the past, audience development has focused on efforts to remove barriers to attract populations that do not visit museums by making them more comfortable and open to visiting. While these efforts entice some members of the desired audience, museums can do more to create sustained relationships and become an active member of the community.

Sandell’s second model, the museum as agent of social regeneration, reveals how museums can take the next step beyond removing barriers to provide special services and become stronger community partners. The museum as agent of social regeneration often partners with other organizations to provide mission-related services to improve human lives and expand museum audiences. Museums can support specific goals identified by communities, to become more meaningful to the community and relevant to its needs

over time. The museum as agent of social regeneration maintains current audiences while providing extra support to new ones. While this model requires more effort than most museums currently put forth to help communities, the benefits and relationships are enhanced as a result. This model can be effective for many of today's museums, and more should investigate what steps their communities need them to take. The extra programming efforts do not conflict with current audiences, and best supports identified needs of the community (Sandell 2002a).

Carolyn Blackmon, a recipient of the award for Excellence in Practice by AAM's Committee on Education, supports the idea that museums must listen to audiences to become better partners. She cites the Field Museum's outreach program as a great example—after receiving input from local teachers, the outreach programs improved immensely and were utilized more often. By meeting the needs of a community, museums will not waste precious resources creating and implementing programs that do not matter to potential and current audiences. Blackmon also asserts that “although museums cannot solve social issues, they can provide a forum and a venue for discussion and, in an advisory role, provide appropriate and supportive linkages that encourage dialogue within the community and its network” (Blackmon 1999, 86), supporting Sandell's second model. Museums can act as a venue for sharing ideas in addition to providing special services to help communities.

Programs created to use museum collections to support therapy among Alzheimer's patients and caregivers, or other long term illnesses, act as great examples of the museum as agent of social regeneration. A collaborative, Museums as Therapeutic Agents, was formed in Bloomington, IN to study how museums can benefit a community

that is not able to visit museums often due to physical constraints. The programs increased self esteem and socialization opportunities, allowed these visitors to form unique connections to the museum, and help the underserved members of the local community (Silverman 2002, 81).

Another example is Holiday in the Museum program at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, which provided a place for at-risk, inner city high school students to spend time during their winter break. The students participated in educational activities within state standards, and were able to spend the break in a safe environment (Tam et al. 2001, 83). By offering this program to a specific audience, the museum provided extra instruction to benefit students who were struggling academically and reduced the amount of time the students spent in troubled home atmospheres, yet still maintained their current museum mission by supporting educational efforts. Sandell's second model, while it is a reach for some museums, is worth the extra effort to create stronger relationships with communities.

Museums may proudly highlight their capabilities to contribute to social change, but they should carefully consider and truthfully acknowledge to what extent they are truly helping. Stephen Weil recognizes the desire to promote what museums have the potential to do, but warns against being hyperbolic, and points out that museums can make a stronger impact when partnering with other community organizations:

Museum workers need to remind themselves more forcefully than they generally do that museums can wonderfully enhance and enrich individual lives, even change them, and make communities better places in which to live. But only rarely—and even then, more often than not in synergy with other institutions—do they truly dent the universe (Weil 2007, 40).

Weil also maintains that museums should not compromise their current programs or reduce the quality of the content to serve in this role. Weil's position on social change and museums supports Sandell's second model, as he maintains the importance of museums retaining their original purpose and not overstepping their bounds (Weil 2007, 229-258).

Sandell's third model, the museum as vehicle for broad social change, directly addresses social exclusion problems, and provides direct services to marginalized groups. This model might require museums to expand their mission to include social responsibility and service to the community, like many museums in the United Kingdom did in the 1990s to receive increased government funding (Hooper-Greenhill 2004). Programs provided by a third model museum directly serve to help human needs and loosely interpret service to the community. For example, museums as vehicles for broad social change might act as a site for Blood Drives, or sponsor an exhibit about disease affecting the community, when this would not otherwise fall under the museum's mission. These programs are admirable and offer resources to people that may spark social change and help improve lives, but are difficult for most museums to justify, as they do not directly support most traditional museum missions. Most museums would be hard pressed to provide the resources and expertise needed to properly create programs for broad social change.

A museum that took the extra step to actually expand their mission to include social responsibility is the Brooklyn Children's Museum, ironically a museum once lead by Ann Billings Gallup, which changed its mission in the 1980s to include helping the community as an essential function of the museum. The museum was already adapting to

the needs of its community, and altered its mission to reflect these changes, recognizing the need to continue to change to stay relevant over time. As the community changed, so did its needs, necessary resources, and the role of the museum. The Brooklyn Children's Museum is now well prepared to deal with new needs as they arise. Some examples of programs to result from this change are after school tutoring and language classes as new ethnic groups moved to the surrounding neighborhood (Lavine 1992, 147-148). While the actions resulting from this mission change could fall under the second or third model, the altering of the mission to include these programs distinctly falls into the third model.

Another example of mission change to support community is The Strong Museum, in Rochester, New York. The Strong Museum was created in 1969 through a bequest of 300,000 objects by Eastman Kodak heiress Margery Woodbury Strong. For twenty years the museum struggled to draw an audience, despite its large endowment, as it was not truly relevant to the local community. The museum abandoned the mission under which it was created to focus inwardly on Strong's collection, and instead created exhibits that mattered to the local community, about AIDS, health care, and more. This museum clearly changed its mission and falls under Sandell's third model (Weil 2003).

In the United Kingdom, where most museums are government funded, widespread change in museum programming began in 1998 due to the largest appropriation ever given to museums from the New Audiences Fund. The goal of this project was to increase support for audience development, ultimately to promote social inclusiveness—a central goal of the government at the time (Kawashima 2006, 56). Museums created new programs, changed their missions to receive additional funding, educated communities, and benefit communities more directly than in the past (Hooper-

Greenhill 2004, 430). Almost all of the projects partnered museums and schools, but some also incorporated community partners. The second round of these projects targeted special groups like families, disaffected youth and social inclusion, and focused on failing schools (Hooper-Greenhill 2004, 428-432). The results were very positive and both museums and communities benefitted from various partnerships, particularly for marginalized populations and national curriculum was enhanced. While total government funding for museum programming is not likely in the United States, the programs created in the United Kingdom stand as positive examples for change and identify how the museum can assume a central role in community, demonstrate how funding sources influence museum programming, and act as examples of Sandell's third model.

Elaine Gurian pushes the envelope and supports Sandell's third model as the ideal model, but recognizes that this is not a realistic option for most institutions. While many museums do not consider prison visits or tutoring as mission-related activities, they should acknowledge that they often meet the communities' identified needs rather than considering them as extraneous (Gurian 1991, 83). Gurian singles out museums that are struggling during the economic crisis which began in 2008 as ideal for meeting Sandell's third model. "But interestingly" she says, "very few are thinking about changing their mission and direction. A museum in trouble could—if it wished—think about this crisis as an opportunity and reconsider its direct relationship with its community. In fact, that is what I am suggesting" (Gurian 2010, 72). Gurian also once suggested that to move beyond barrier removal, museums should waive admission fees entirely, as fees turn museum visits into special occasions instead of every day occasions, like library visits

(Gurian 2005). Libraries are free to visit, so visitors drop by frequently to use this community resource. Gurian argues that museums have this same potential, when admission fees are removed.

In recent years, she has identified other ways for museums to support communities and provide direct social services (Sandell's third model) without jeopardizing earned income. Museums are responding to the current economic crisis by partnering with community organizations. Gurian encourages them to maintain these relationships and consider these changes permanent rather than temporary. She notes the physical attributes of museum buildings alone are resources to offer communities. For example, providing reasonably priced menu items in the museum café, or offering gathering space to a church group that cannot pay rent, are ways museums can provide direct services that do not interfere with other functions. Finding middle ground and the right fit for each museum will create sustainable community partnerships and programs (Gurian 2010). Museums can provide many different services to support communities become the essential meeting places Gurian would like to see:

My dream is that the museum will become a clubhouse for all who need it, and the community will be strengthened by it. The terms "clubhouse," "forum," "town square," and "meeting ground" have been used frequently in contemporary press releases by many institutions that have not fully embraced what these terms mean and what alteration must be undertaken in their program mix. If we could regard these terms seriously, we will have used this stressful time of diminished resources as an opportunity to transform museums into something recognized by all as essential for our collective well being (Gurian 2010, 83).

Most museums today that aim to provide public service follow Sandell's first model, the socially inclusive museum, by removing physical, financial or psychological

barriers to make the museum more accessible. However, without creating special programs for specific audiences or aiming to meet community goals, museums may reach only a limited population and ignore many other underserved audiences. Opening the doors to all audiences is a great first step, but museums cannot guarantee that all people will come inside. By showing specific groups what the museum has to offer, they are more likely to return due to personal interest and relevance to their lives. When acting as agents of social regeneration, museums aim to improve lives and help people form positive associations with the museum. By providing opportunities for human pairs to bond through shared experience, or to learn a skill, museums can support communities that need help the most. Sandell's third model, the museum as agent for broad social regeneration, directly addresses exclusion programs, but most museums do not see this as their mission or have the resources even if they wanted to do so. Sandell's models demonstrate how museums contribute to become meaningful, vital members of local community, and recognize the importance of working with individuals, specific communities and overall society (Sandell 2002a, 4).

While professional organizations and some museum leaders are on board with this movement to act as stronger community partners, not everyone believes this is truly a feasible or appropriate goal. Just as many museum professionals fought against change in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, today's movement faces challenges as well. The central challenge to achieving social change through museum work is ensuring that all parties share the same goals and realizations. Not only the museum staff, but more importantly, the museum board must see the value. When a board does not understand the museum field's goals to support community initiatives, Elizabeth Merritt recommends pointing

out AAM's support through publications like *Excellence and Equity*, and the creation of AAM's Center for the Future of Museums. While the board may not initially envision the museum working in this capacity, they may understand that audiences are more willing to work with museums when they give back and are integral to society, and that doing so establishes a connection to local audiences (Merritt and Ledbetter 2009). In reality, the resources of the museum are unique, so programs can have a lasting effect (Gurian 1991, 84).

In the future, museums need to study how they can contribute, by learning from other models, and replace episodic partnerships with sustained relationships (Hirzy 2002, 11). Serving the underserved is a goal for museums, but few museums have consistent programs to serve them. Museums should realize that their role in social change is not central, but supportive, and acknowledge the responsibility to help (Sandell 2002b, xvii).

Through efforts to truly serve community needs, museums do support efforts of the social work field to improve human lives and strengthen human relationships. From opening doors to impoverished communities, to the creation of community museums in the 1960s, museums have increasingly welcomed marginalized groups, underserved audiences, and local communities in attempts to diversify their audiences and share resources to become stronger community partners. Museums can support the goals of social work especially by helping meet relationship needs through programs, field trips, and more (Silverman 2010, 147). Museums are increasingly recognizing the importance and benefits of working with community audiences, and have attempted programs with these goals in mind with varying degrees of success and consciousness. Museums have a

responsibility to help where they can, and form mutually beneficial relationships with communities.

In conclusion, all museums have great potential to act as agents of social change at some level, as evidenced by the many institutions that have already created excellent programs and exhibits to help improve lives. While museums were not originally created with education for the masses as a central function, they have gradually evolved into education institutions that provide a large variety of services to an increasingly diverse public. Creative programming can help people satisfy relationship needs, teach basic skills for better jobs, address poverty and homelessness and so much more. However, museums must examine their missions and resources to establish more programs that will best benefit individuals in local communities while maintaining their identity as museums with multiple functions. The more a museum can meet the needs of their community, the more people will form personal connections to the museum and view it as a meaningful resource. In attempts to reach new audiences, museums must not abandon their traditional audience to focus on new audiences, but should whenever possible incorporate special programs to allow marginalized groups to form personal connections.

Consider the strides the field has made to accept education as a function of museums, and the battles fought by pioneers like Gallup, Kent and Dana to persuade their peers that museums should provide educational opportunities to all people. Perhaps decades from now, today's museum leaders like Weil, Gurian and Silverman—modern day pioneers fighting to demonstrate the potential and obligation for museums to contribute to social change—will no longer be considered radicals for their ideas. The museum professionals of the future are embracing these ideas more than ever, as Stephen

Weil wrote in 1999, “There are, I think, few people working in the museum field today who doubt for a moment that museums can meet such a standard. Museums quintessentially have the potency to change what people may know or think or feel, to affect what attitudes they may adopt or display, to influence what values they form” (Weil 2007, 39). Museums have potential to contribute to much needed societal changes and improve millions of lives.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Finding the Right Partner

In September of 2010, I met with Ashley Weaver, Program Manager of the Greater Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program, to discuss forming a partnership with the Mayborn Museum Complex (MMC). I planned to use the MMC as a place to provide opportunities for BPRP volunteers to informally evaluate students' reading skills, to nurture relationships and strengthen bonds between adult volunteers and students, to reward students for improvement and motivate them to continue to read, and to facilitate a love for learning in museums and positively influence learning attitudes. Most students in the BPRP were not frequent museum visitors. To make the most of this partnership, I learned more about the creation and goals of the Greater Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program and the Mayborn Museum Complex.

### *Mayborn Museum Complex*

The Sue and Frank Mayborn Natural Science and Cultural History Museum Complex at Baylor University in Waco, TX formally opened to the public in 2004, combining the Strecker Museum, the Ollie Mae Moen Discovery Center, and the Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village. The Strecker Museum, originally known as the Baylor University Museum, was formed to house and preserve specimens collected by the Baylor University science departments for study. In 1940 it was renamed the Strecker Museum after long serving former curator and director John

Strecker, much of its extensive collections are currently displayed in the Natural Science and Cultural History Exhibits Hall of the Mayborn Museum Complex (Gerhardt 1995, 11).

The Strecker Museum's educational efforts made great strides under director Bryce Brown, from 1966 to 1978. Under Dr. Brown's direction, the Strecker Museum sought to demonstrate its place in the local communities of Waco and Baylor University, in order to receive funding from the University and local civic groups, like the Waco Junior League. Dr. Brown extended the hours of the museum, collaborated with various departments of the University to create new exhibits, and marketed the acquisition of a Plesiosaur fossil to attract children to the museums on the weekend. These efforts expanded the audience of the Strecker Museum and firmly established the museum as an educational asset to the community. The commitment to education continued to expand the Strecker Museum's impact with the addition of the Ollie Mae Moen Discovery Center and the Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village. Today, the Mayborn Museum Complex offers educational opportunities in the form of exhibitions, school group tours, lectures, and more (Gerhardt 1995, 50).

The Mayborn Museum Complex is currently composed of 17 Discovery Rooms for hands on learning (modeled after the exhibits from the Ollie Mae Moen Discovery Center), a Natural Science and Cultural History Exhibits Hall, a traveling exhibit hall, and the Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village, which is currently undergoing renovation to reopen in 2012. The Natural Science and Cultural History Exhibits Hall lent itself to this project well, as the natural history specimens were ideal subjects for the

educational activities on both field trips during the collaboration with the Best Practices Reading Program.

*Greater Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program*

The Greater Waco Education Alliance (GWEA) formed in fall 2008 as the product of an Education Summit held by community leaders in Waco, Texas. The Education Summit called attention to the high percentage of families in Waco living below the poverty line, and recognized the need to improve the quality of life for all Waco citizens. When students receive high quality early education they are less likely to turn to crime and less likely to live in poverty.

The GWEA was created with the mission to “develop an understanding that the entire community shares responsibility for educating every citizen. We believe that developing a community expectation of higher education for all students will maximize quality of life and enhance the economic future” (Greater Waco Community Education Alliance 2009). The GWEA set eight goals to improve educational performance, including helping students read on grade level or above by the fifth grade, which is an indicator of future success in school. Based on these goals, the GWEA created the Best Practices Reading Program in 2009 to support Waco students who were falling behind in reading. Students involved with the program read with consistent volunteers, with whom they are encouraged to bond, to meet the reading level of their grade, and prepare them for future success in school. The majority of volunteers with the BPRP are undergraduate students at Baylor University.

## Building a Relationship

Building a relationship with the community partner was essential for communication and trust, and for the collaboration to succeed. I had to become a part of the GWEA and BPRP and believe in its mission for the project to succeed. To build a relationship with the GWEA, I visited the reading program after school at J. H. Hines Elementary on a regular basis, around ten hours weekly for a span of six months throughout the project. I initially attended a volunteer training session of the Best Practices Reading Program, conducted by Ashley Weaver, to learn more about the daily operations of the program, and to brainstorm how a special museum experience using the resources of the Mayborn Museum Complex could help support its goals.

Students from J. H. Hines Elementary School in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade were selected for the program; the common characteristic was their low reading testing scores. Each student was paired with two adult volunteers; each volunteer read for two hours per week to make up for “lap time” (one-on-one reading time with an adult that they may not receive at home). The pairs simulated lap time to improve confidence and familiarity with reading. The volunteers encouraged students to choose books that are slightly above the students’ tested reading level, and evaluated student progress through monthly sight word identification, a common method for evaluating reading progress in schools.

The adult volunteers and students form close relationships while reading together and answering get-to-know-you questionnaires; close relationships with consistency

make the students feel comfortable and open to learning. It was clear from observing the reading program that the volunteers' attendance on the field trips would support the student's progress and strengthen the bond of the pairs, so encouraging their attendance was imperative.

While the Best Practices Reading Program is available at two schools in the Waco Independent School District, Ashley Weaver encouraged me to work solely with students at J. H. Hines Elementary School, where the program was more established and serving more students. The program grew continuously during the six months I worked with the BPRP, and the student participants changed often due to school transfers, disciplinary issues, and also significant reading improvement.

### Planning the First Museum Experience

My original plan, to use the visit to the Mayborn Museum Complex as a reward and motivation for students when they had collectively read over 4,000 pages, changed after observing the students during the reading program. While I was confident they could reach this goal, I realized tracking the pages would be difficult due to the number of absences among the students, and the number of new students added to the program throughout the semester. The original purposes of the museum visits were to reward performance, to provide resources for volunteers to informally evaluate the students' reading skills, and to strengthen relationships between students and volunteers; this was broadened to also include creating a love for learning, and encouraging this audience to visit museums. I sought to create a museum visit that provided more direct support to a specific group than an average museum field trip, and create an entire experience at the

museum that would encourage students and support the BPRP's goals and community needs. The museum experience created for the partnership was designed with the needs of the students in mind.

Prior to arranging the details of the museum experience and creating the educational activity, I interviewed the adult volunteers to find out what the students thought about the upcoming field trip, and to better understand their learning attitudes and progress. I conducted all interviews in person in order to meet and build relationships with volunteers, and to encourage them to attend the trip. I continued to promote the museum experience to the volunteers through personal interactions and emails.

Feedback from the volunteers inspired the theme of the education program for the first field trip, and identified student needs I needed to meet in order to maximize learning while at the museum. Volunteers explained that the students were fixated on eating after school snacks before they were able to focus on reading during the BPRP, so I prioritized snack time during the museum experience. Although this may seem trivial, it was important to meet the basic needs of the students to ensure they were able to focus on learning.

Arranging the logistics of the first museum visit was challenging, as I was a third party to both the Best Practices Reading Program and J. H. Hines Elementary School. The first step in making arrangements was meeting with school officials, including curriculum coordinator Lily Oubre, Counseling in Schools (CIS) Manager Amy Toney, and Principal Archie Hatten. We worked together and coordinated with the MMC staff

to select a date for the field trip, to create a permission slip for the students, and to ensure that all after-school programs at J. H. Hines approved the visit.

Two separate, after-school programs at J. H. Hines Elementary School funnel students into the BPRP. Both after-school programs, Communities in Schools (CIS) and After School Tutoring, were required to approve the trip. The students in the CIS program required different permissions and bus arrangements than students in the After School Tutoring program. To overcome this obstacle, I worked with the manager of the CIS program, Amy Toney, to draft a letter stating that the museum visit was not an official CIS function, and arranged a longer time frame for the bus rental in case the group did not return in time for the students to catch their normal bus home. Confusion over liability slowed down the distribution of permission slips, but with assistance from the Baylor University Legal Department, this problem was resolved.

I sent permission slips home with students two weeks prior to the visit to the MMC. Due to the constant addition of new students to the BPRP, tracking which students had received a permission slip was a challenge. The majority of students returned their permission slips the day of the field trip, and J. H. Hines Elementary School called several parents to gain permission over the phone at the last minute. The school partners recognized the value of the field trip because I spent time explaining my project to them, and their support again proves how critical teamwork is to success between partners.

Arranging transportation for the field trip was challenging at first, because I was not affiliated with the Waco Independent School District, and the bus depot was unsure how to handle the payment. Ultimately, I negotiated to reimburse J. H. Hines Elementary

School after the school followed the typical process for booking a school bus for a field trip.

In addition to fitting into the schedule of J. H. Hines Elementary School, it was also important to ensure that the Mayborn Museum Complex was available at these times and that they did not conflict with the museum's activities and events. Assistance from the MMC staff made the coordination possible, and was done through Museum Operations Manager, Patricia Pack.

Most of the logistical struggles of this project were the result of pioneering a new program and forming a new partnership, and solutions were easily negotiated by exploring different channels of communication. It was also essential that all partners were kept informed and key contacts maintained.

### *Planning the Educational Activity*

The educational activity for the first museum experience was designed around information gained from the first set of volunteer interviews, as well as museum education theory, with the goal of encouraging students to practice reading comprehension and sight word recognition, and to facilitate bonding within pairs. Many volunteers noted that their students most enjoyed reading mystery books, so I designed a game that required students to assume the role of detective, and follow the clues to solve the mystery of the missing mammoth fossils. Clues incorporated sight words that all elementary students should be able to identify, and the students were required to

comprehend the message in order to move on to the next clue. At the end of the activity, students were allowed to touch mammoth fossils.

Challenges to this component of the project were writing the educational activity for multiple grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade, and ensuring the students would find the activity interesting. It was also critical to have assistance and cooperation from MMC education and collections staff members.

### *Field Trip Logistics*

Arranging the logistics for the day of the museum visit on December 2, 2010 was very smooth due to the support of the Mayborn Museum Complex staff and graduate students from the Baylor University Department of Museum Studies who volunteered to help.

Preparing for the day included placing welcome signs outside the museum, decorating the snack room and arranging the snacks. The purpose of this detailed preparation was to help the students feel comfortable and welcomed into the museum setting, and to recognize that this was a special opportunity. I also set up the educational activity, loaded the school buses at J. H. Hines Elementary School with four adult chaperones, oversaw that the school bus to arrive on time, and monitored the educational activity and observed student reactions.

Volunteers typically read with students for one hour between 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm, and were invited to come to the MMC during their normal reading hour. They were encouraged to stay longer if they could, although their schedules did not always allow

this. While students waited for their volunteer to arrive at staggered thirty minute intervals, they participated in a self guided group tour around the Discovery Room side of the MMC, room by room so they could see more of the museum and engage in free choice learning. When volunteers arrived, they then led the students through the activity and enjoyed a snack together. Upon leaving, the volunteers dropped the student back off with the self guided group led by MMC staff, Department of Museum Studies students, and BPRP lead volunteers, so students were accounted for at all times. Students were concerned about whether or not their volunteers were coming, and appeared excited when they were picked up to participate in the educational activity.

A total of 17 adult volunteers and 39 students came to the Mayborn Museum Complex on the museum visit. The low attendance of the volunteers was unexpected, despite the fact that final exams were approaching at Baylor University. Even without a volunteer for every child, every student had the opportunity to play the educational game with a Mayborn staff member or other BPRP volunteers. After the first museum experience, every student received a free family pass to return to the Mayborn Museum Complex any time.

I used an online survey to gather information from all volunteers, including those who did not attend, after the first trip to assess the progress of their student, the students' interest level in returning, whether the activity was fun and effective, and other general comments.

## Planning the Second Museum Experience

Feedback from the first museum experience assisted the development of the second field trip to the MMC, which took place on February 24, 2011. During preparation for second field trip, special emphasis was placed on encouraging more volunteers to attend the museum experience, and developing another interesting educational activity for the students.

To attract more volunteers to participate, I reached out to volunteers through personal interactions, email, and multiple notes and hand outs, and relied on Ashley Weaver to send reminder emails.

Coordinating permission slips and transportation was a much easier process for the second trip, as I had learned the proper route while planning the first visit. I booked the bus through J. H. Hines Elementary School once again, but sent permission slips home one month before the trip in order to receive more back before the day of the visit. This was effective; however, I still called a few parents the day of the trip to request permission for their student to attend. My contacts at J. H. Hines Elementary indicated that this is a normal pattern for permission slip return rates at their school.

## *Planning the Educational Activity*

The educational activity for the second museum experience was designed to evaluate writing composition skills and reading comprehension, as well as to facilitate

bonding between the volunteer and student pairs. The students read and followed a short clue finding activity designed to set up the story line, leading them to an exhibit that had opened since their first field trip to the MMC, “Chasing the Bone Pile.” The students were asked to help make an exhibit for the museum by creating labels for their favorite artifacts in the “Chasing the Bone Pile” exhibit and the Cabinets of Curiosity room. Both locations in the MMC are filled with unusual natural history specimens and artifacts. Each grade level was provided with different writing requirements, and students were encouraged to write what they liked about the object or a fact they had learned. The volunteers assisted the students with this process. This education activity helped to reinforce and support their writing skills, and provided students with an opportunity to practice writing for their upcoming TAKS test.

### *Logistics*

Logistics for the second visit to the MMC were similar to the first museum experience. The museum was decorated to welcome the students and volunteers, and snacks were provided. The museum staff once again helped to facilitate the activity, and directed the self guided group tour. When volunteers arrived during their designated hour, they picked up their students and participated in the activity. Most volunteers stayed longer this time to play around the museum with their student and strengthen their relationship. Perhaps both students and volunteers were seeing the museum as a fun place to learn.

Volunteer attendance was much higher for the second museum experience. Almost every student had a volunteer to play with, as 35 volunteers came for the 37 students. The students were once again given free family passes to return to the Mayborn Museum. However, they were especially encouraged to return that weekend, as the labels they created would be on exhibit, and they could show their families what they learned. After the second field trip, information was gathered from volunteers, again through an online survey.

## ANALYSIS OF PROJECT

### Project Goals

The three goals initially established to determine how the museum experiences at the Mayborn Museum Complex would support the Best Practices Reading Program were:

1. To provide opportunities for BPRP volunteers to informally evaluate students' reading skills
2. To nurture relationships and strengthen bonds between adult volunteers and students
3. To reward students for improvement and motivate them to continue to read.

These goals evolved after the first round of volunteer interviews and observations to include a fourth goal:

4. To facilitate a love for learning in museums and positively influence learning attitudes.

The extent to which each goal was met is a strong indicator of the Mayborn Museum Complex's capability to meet important needs in the local community. In order to evaluate how, and to what extent, each goal was met through the project, I relied upon personal observations from the Best Practices Reading Program, observations from each field trip (including student behavior, written labels, etc), and a series of three information gathering assessments with BPRP volunteers. The first information

gathering assessment was an in-person interview with volunteers prior to the first field trip, followed by two online surveys distributed to volunteers after each field trip.

Each information gathering assessment provided insight into student improvement, the students' attitudes toward reading, and the student-volunteer relationships. This project was approved by the Institutional Review Board with the understanding that I would protect student anonymity due to sensitive information regarding student progress. As a result, I interviewed and surveyed the adult volunteers rather than the students themselves in order to preserve anonymity, and to most effectively gather information. All assessments were conducted with an informal approach and considered the opinions of the volunteers, who best understand the progress of their individual student reading partners.

The first information gathering assessment, in-person interviews with BPRP volunteers, established a baseline of students' reading skills and attitudes for comparison later in the project, and produced valuable information to guide and develop the educational activity for the first museum experience. Thirty adult volunteers were interviewed during this phase. The second information gathering assessment, an online survey, examined student improvement, reading attitudes, the impact of the field trip, and collected input to benefit the second field trip; 17 volunteers responded to this online survey. The third round of information gathering, also in the form of an online survey, was a final assessment of improvement and attitudes and pair bonding, and asked the volunteers to note whether or not the experience at the Mayborn Museum Complex was beneficial for their students; 23 volunteers responded to the second online survey.

Feedback from interviews and observations from the field trips indicate that all goals of the partnership were met with varying degrees of success.

*GOAL 1: To provide opportunities for BPRP volunteers to informally evaluate students' reading skills*

Each experience at the museum provided opportunities for BPRP volunteers to informally evaluate students' reading skills through the educational activities—reading and identifying sight words during the first field trip, and reading sight words and composing labels during the second. The intention was not to necessarily improve reading skills from the field trip alone, but to support the ongoing efforts of the Education Alliance. Information gathered from volunteer interviews and surveys helped create each educational activity, and determine how well the partnership met this first goal.

The round of in-person interviews with 30 BPRP volunteers began in September 2010, and revealed that volunteers felt most students were reading slightly below their grade level. However, some students read significantly below, while some were even slightly above grade level. Most students could comfortably recognize sight words (a designated list of words all elementary school student should be capable of identifying). Volunteers noted that improvement was difficult to gauge in the early stages of the fall semester. I also learned that students most enjoyed mystery books and books about nature, and developed the first activity to accommodate these interests.

The first field trip activity was completed by 43 students. From the first online survey, which was distributed after the first museum visit, it was determined that 100% of the 17 survey respondents who attended the visit agreed that the educational activity

proved that students were able to identify sight words, thus accomplishing the goal of the activity. Overall, the first museum experience enhanced students' knowledge and skills. The following feedback guided my attempts to provide an improved experience next time:

- “The prompts on the cards were a little on the long side. My reading buddy wanted to look around at all of the cool things in the museum instead of reading the long clues on the card.”
- “I thought it was very creative, fun, and interactive visit. However, the time frame to get through it was so short! Maybe next time there would be some way to extend that amount of time, because it was very evident that the students (and volunteers) were enjoying the whole experience.”
- “Better coordination of the Discovery Rooms, many of the kids got bored up there rather quickly. Maybe less time too.”

From this feedback, I crafted the second activity and retooled some of the logistics.

After the second museum experience occurred, the volunteers were asked to complete a second online survey. This survey revealed that 70% of the 23 survey respondents felt that their students had shown improvement since they began working together. Because the evaluation was informal in nature, and the project did not include a control group for comparison, it is impossible to say whether or not the museum directly impacted this improvement. Regardless, improvement, as reflected in the comments below, is a positive result for all partners involved.

- “[My student] has definitely shown improvement in reading. He went from reading 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level books hesitantly to looking forward to taking on 5<sup>th</sup> grade books. He has developed a lot more confidence in reading and is an incredibly quick learner.”
- “Her reading selections have matured. Instead of choosing simple short books, she is more willing to begin chapter books.”

Evidence of learning comes from volunteer feedback regarding the first and second museum experiences. Volunteers cited the game as fun and engaging in the second online survey, as it held the students’ interest and the content of the museum exhibits encouraged students to learn more by reading. Volunteers offered mixed opinions regarding whether or not the museum experiences helped them to evaluate reading skills. The following volunteer feedback from both online surveys provides examples of learning in the museum and some of the challenges about measuring improvement in reading skills.

- “She learned what a fossil was and we had many conversations about the various artifacts. She also learned new words while on the trip.”
- “My student enjoyed the scavenger hunt and the idea of having to play the role of a detective. It was a great activity. I also enjoyed this, too. We learned a significant amount of information about mammoths and other animals.”

- “It is hard to tell. I think the Museum trip was more about exposing the children to new things. The Mayborn is very interactive.”
- “Writing the paragraph was a good way to see how the kids were able to put their thoughts into writing.”
- “I think any exposure or experience that she might not get from home is a positive.”
- “I hadn’t ever seen my student compose anything so the labels showed me how he is able to put thoughts together in sentence form.”

Observations during both museum experiences indicated that the MMC is an environment where reading skills can be emphasized, thus meeting goals of the BBRP. Student and volunteer pairs actively helped each other read the clues during the first field trip, and students worked to comprehend the clues to finish the challenge. Pairs also worked together to read instructions and compose labels, reflecting a strengthening of reading skills.

The project successfully met its goal to provide opportunities for volunteers to informally evaluate reading skills, by allowing students to practice their reading skills, and encouraging pairs to read together. Volunteers were provided with the opportunity to assess their students’ capabilities in a new, interesting setting. This project never intended to gather data using an objective, scientific framework, as informal learning in a museum setting is difficult to measure. However, interview statements from volunteers and observations clearly show evidence of learning. Feedback from volunteers regarding the impact of the museum visit on the students and their ability to complete the

educational activities during both museum experiences is satisfactory. The ability of the museum to serve as an opportunity for evaluation of progress allows it to be a strong partner for the reading program.

*GOAL 2: To nurture relationships and strengthen bonds between adult volunteers and students*

In order for the reading program to work effectively, students and volunteers must feel comfortable with each other. Facilitating this relationship is important so that the students trust the adult volunteers, who act as a stable presence in their learning journey. The closer the bond of the pair, the better the volunteer can assess improvement, and the more comfortable the student feels to try new things. Facilitating this relationship is important to the BPRP, and the museum experiences offered opportunities for pairs to bond while doing something fun and more interactive than the typical reading setting. This goal was measured through the information gathering assessments, heavily relying on the volunteers' opinions of their relationships with the students, and from observations during both museum experiences.

The in-person interviews in the early fall revealed that students and volunteers were at very different levels of relationship, as some pairs had worked together for one year, and others only for a few weeks. Throughout the entire reading program, students and volunteers were continuously added, so the strength of the relationships varied. Comments from several volunteers in the first survey indicated that the students were looking forward to participating in the field trip with their volunteer, and the volunteers'

presence at the museum was important to them. Students clearly wanted to bond with their volunteers through this experience. Volunteers revealed during the survey:

- “He requested that I attend with him and seemed excited.”
- “She seemed interested and excited about getting to go on a field trip after school. In part, I think she liked the idea because it meant she wouldn’t have to read in the library with me.”
- “She was very excited and wanted to make sure I was coming.”

When asked what were the students’ and volunteers’ favorite aspects of the first museum experience, one volunteer wrote: “I think working together, for both of us.” The interactions among pairs during the educational activity helped to facilitate bonding, and the children demonstrated an ownership in the museum during the second visit. Even volunteers who joined the reading program after the first museum visit noticed the student’s affection for the museum, and recognized the opportunity for the pair to bond, as evidenced through comments from the second online survey:

- “She knew where exhibits were and wanted to show me things.”
- “He remembered a lot of what he saw in December and was anxious to tell me about it.”

Observations from both museum experiences clearly indicated that bonding occurred as a result of the visit to the MMC. Students’ behavior was more open while at

the museum than it normally is during the reading program, and they wanted the volunteers to stay as long as possible. In addition to assisting students with the activities during each field trip, volunteers asked students personal questions about their favorite artifacts and experiences in the museum to get to know them better. During the second museum experience, I observed that most volunteers stayed at the museum longer than was expected of them, and after they completed the educational activity, they informally toured the discovery rooms of the museum with their students. This informal time spent together contributed to bonding of pairs, as the volunteers and students explored and took ownership of the museum together.

Survey results and observations indicate that the museum visits helped to facilitate bonding among pairs, as students were looking forward to volunteers attending the field trip, and while there, they relied on each other to complete the educational activities. Results from the survey after the second museum visit revealed that 87% of volunteers felt they had formed a closer relationship with their student. Achieving this goal supports the larger goals of the BPRP and the needs of the local community.

*GOAL 3: To reward students for improvement and motivate them to continue to read.*

The third goal, to use the museum field trips as a reward for improvement, was difficult to implement. In order to understand how the museum could be presented to the students as a reward they desired, I interviewed the volunteers to learn what motivated their students. Volunteers indicated that students were motivated to read in order to be good at something, to show off their skills to volunteers, to catch up to their peers, to

learn about a certain topic, and to read books their peers recommended. As mentioned previously, snacks were also a strong motivator for students to feel comfortable while reading. My intention originally was to assess whether or not using the museum as a motivating factor would encourage the students to work hard. However, while they seemed to enjoy earning prizes like food, representing the museum in this way did not seem fair or consistent with the standards of the reading program. Some students simply do not improve as quickly as others, or are capable of reading a certain number of pages no matter how much effort they put forth, and the disparity among reading levels was vast. Instead, it was agreed by both partners that the field trip should function as a motivating factor for good behavior in the BPRP, and to create positive learning attitudes.

Rather than consider the field trips as a motivation to work harder, I focused instead on making the students' experience with the BPRP a fun experience that would appeal to them and as a something very special just for the students in the program to recognize them for their hard work.

The survey after the second museum experience revealed that 93% of volunteers believed the students would be motivated to read in order to earn another trip to the museum. I attribute this to the student's level of satisfaction with both museum experiences rather than their desire to read in order to earn a reward, based on volunteer comments.

*GOAL 4: Facilitate a love for learning in museums and positively influence learning attitudes*

Feedback from the volunteers through information gathering assessments and observations indicate that the museum experiences helped facilitate a love for learning among the J. H. Hines Reading Program students, and positively influenced their learning attitudes. As these students would not likely otherwise have many opportunities to visit museums, it is important they form positive associations with museums to want to visit in the future. According to the first online surveys, 44% of volunteers knew their students had not visited the Mayborn prior to the first trip and 31% were unsure. It is therefore likely that a substantial portion of these students had not visited the MMC. Informal observations at the Best Practices Reading Program also indicate that many students had not visited the MMC.

From the in-person interviews, I learned that while some students do enjoy reading, half of the volunteers indicated that their students either do not enjoy reading or only occasionally enjoy reading. Many volunteers mentioned their student feels left out of the fun, after school activities, as one volunteer said about her student, “She is willing to read but is frustrated that she misses out on after school activities.”

After the first museum experience, 40% of volunteers said their students’ attitudes were improved since reading together. After the second visit this increased further, as more survey respondents indicated their students’ attitudes had positively changed or had remained positive. Although this is not necessarily a direct result of the museum experiences alone, it is a positive result for all parties involved in the partnership.

Observations during both museum experiences indicate that students were very engaged with all museum exhibits and actively played and learned in the museum. Volunteer interviews clearly support that this goal to facilitate a love for learning in museums:

- “My student really liked the museum a lot and is excited about returning with the free family pass.”
- “She was very excited about the museum and had wild imagination when playing in the rooms.”
- “He was thrilled—so excited. Look at this, look at this!”
- “He was excited to see the whole museum. He wanted to stay longer in each room to see as many objects as possible.”

In the second online survey, 64% of volunteers indicated students seemed comfortable and familiar with the museum (23% were unsure, but some of the respondents to this question indicated they were not on the trip and could not answer this question), and that the experiences had a positive impact on students’ desire to learn. Personal observations also indicated that positive learning attitudes absolutely resulted from the museum experiences. The students were very expressive during both field trips, and drew pictures of favorite objects. During the second trip, while making labels, students were so comfortable that they laid on the floor while composing their labels. Children ran through the museum to solve the game, and enjoyed playing in the rooms.

When I visited the school weekly, children often asked me when would they get to go back to the museum, indicating that they enjoyed their visit and were eager to return.

In conclusion, the goals set for the project were met both indirectly and directly. After the second round of interviews, 95.7% of volunteers said that the museum is a good community partner to the Education Alliance, and 100% said the students enjoyed the museum visits.

### Challenges

Challenges to this program primarily centered on logistics, including organizing transportation as a third party, encouraging the volunteers to participate, and making sure the students were returning the permission slips. These challenges were the result of the new partnership and uncertainty over where to turn for answers, and each of these processes improved between the first and second museum visits. With help from the GWEA, and individuals from J. H. Hines Elementary School, solutions were found to all challenges. Some things, the timing of the first museum visit during exams at Baylor University for example, were inevitable; however, for the second field trip I learned to investigate the University calendar, as it obviously impacted the availability of the volunteers who were Baylor students.

Staffing the field trip activities for this project was possible with help from the Education Staff of the MMC, as well as fellow graduate students from the Department of Museum Studies at Baylor University. Other museums without a large staff might or university students will have to find creative solutions in finding volunteers.

Evaluating this project was difficult, as assessing any museum education program which only occurs a few times is complicated. Museums depend on a great deal of subjective and qualitative measurement. Setting broad and reasonable goals and observing the participants, is the best way to evaluate their success. Listening to feedback from program participants also provides insight to whether or not the program met its intended goals.

The most disappointing aspect of the project was the low return rate of the free family passes. Free passes, valid for up to six people, were distributed to students after each museum visit in order to determine if the students were interested in returning with their families. Notes were sent home with students before and after the second museum experience explaining that the exhibit created by the students would remain on display for one weekend if they were interested in visiting during this time. Passes did not expire until April. The return rate of the passes was extremely low, as only two passes—both distributed after the second field trip—were returned to the museum. The two students who returned with their families each brought five people with them.

Many factors could account for the low return rate. Considering the difficulty in receiving the permission slips back from the students, it is very possible that the free passes were never given to an adult. Additionally, this situation demonstrates the importance of museum programs that not only support community goals, but actively reach out to new, underserved audiences. The free pass, like “Free Sundays” for the public, is demonstrative of Sandell’s first model of barrier removal. By removing a financial barrier, museums make it easier for audiences to visit, but other barriers such as the intimidation of a museum, particularly one on a university campus, still exist. Like

their children, many of the parents have probably not visited many museums, and might be anxious for fear of feeling unwelcomed in an unfamiliar setting. A partnership between the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the English for Speakers of Other Languages program, led by museum educator Marla Shoemaker, saw similar results when parents were invited to join their children at the museum after forming a special connection through educational programming developed specifically for them. The museum provided special food and other accommodations to draw the parents, but very few attended. Shoemaker cites similar reasons of intimidation, transportation as limiting factors for parental involvement (Shoemaker 1998).

Projects like the partnership between the MMC and the BPRP, and the previous example from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, created a reason and means for these new audiences to visit the museum while meeting community goals. Both projects are examples of Sandell's second model, as they provided a more meaningful experience for visitors to want to return. The students involved in the BPRP participated in second model program and formed special connections to the museum, but their parents only received the free family pass. As a result, the parents may not have shared the same desire as their children to visit the museum or capability to bring their students back to the museum. Other limiting factors include inability to take time off from work, or transportation issues. In the future, involving the parents more, beyond the many notes sent home with students, might improve the return rate.

### Recommendation: Commitment to Greater Service

The Mayborn Museum Complex is equipped to support the community goals set by the Waco Education Alliance's Best Practices Reading Program to meet community needs. The MMC successfully partnered with the BPRP and supported its goals through the use of the museum's resources. From this project, I learned many lessons regarding successful collaborations. I overcame many challenges to this process, and recognize the importance of steps I took in order to successfully meet the needs of this partnership and the Waco community.

When creating community programs in museums, the most important aspect is building a relationship with the partner and ensuring everyone reaches a consensus of the goals. I met several times with the Waco Education Alliance staff prior to designing the field trips, and observed the Best Practices Reading Program multiple times weekly to truly understand their goals, which were already designed to help meet needs of the Waco community. Due to the amount of time I developing a relationship with the BPRP, I felt certain the museum experience could benefit students in the BPRP, and help the program meet its goals. Without this level of understanding between partners, I would not have been able to work with the students, learn where to look for contact information, or successfully create my programs with input from people with expertise beyond my own. The strength of the community partnership was extremely important to the success of this project. Museums seeking similar partnerships should look first at what the community or partner needs, and then look to their missions and resources to see whether they can support that type of project. Fitting needs and resources is important for a natural partnership to occur.

Building strong relationships allows museums to get to know the people involved in communities and organizations, which facilitates communication. It was essential that the BPRP volunteers understood the purpose of the project in order for the collaboration to succeed. I spent considerable time at J. H. Hines Elementary talking with the BPRP volunteers and encouraging them to attend the field trips. The presence of the volunteers was vital to the success of the collaboration. The serious time commitment needed to build and sustain these relationships is essential.

Museums must remain flexible with partner organizations as they evolve. For example, the BPRP grew larger during the time I worked with them, which was one of their goals. I ensured that all students would be able to come on the trip, even if this meant reserving a second school bus, etc. Before working with a partner organization, consider what their goals are and whether or not the museum can be flexible enough to accommodate them.

Currently, the MMC's efforts to meet community needs fall under Sandell's first model, as the MMC offers monthly "Free Sunday" programs. The collaboration between the MMC and the BPRP falls under Sandell's second model. Clearly, the MMC is capable of meeting higher needs in the community for a stronger community relationship; however, sustaining second model projects is often more difficult than first model projects. In order to sustain this project, I recommend the Mayborn Museum Complex assign a staff member who would dedicate their efforts to social and community programs. Consistency and coordination are very important, and while I was the connection between the museum and this project, a permanent staff member would be necessary for this second model to continue. The project was labor intensive, and would

be difficult to sustain long term without a staff member dedicated to this type of project, and other similar projects. This is a primary reason why museums struggle to move past Sandell's first model of barrier removal as a way to help communities; moving to the higher model with programs like the BPRP partnership presents huge challenges. Limited resources are difficult to allocate to these specialized programs, which usually serve small audiences. Museums looking to go beyond removing barriers and truly meeting greater needs can look to their communities to find such needs. The Waco Education Alliance had already identified the needs of the Waco community, which made the partnership and goals easy to combine.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the Mayborn Museum Complex was a strong community partner to the Waco Education Alliance by supporting its' goals to improve the quality of life for all Waco citizens, particularly those who need help the most. While most museums have the capabilities to remove financial barriers, at least occasionally, to make help underserved audiences visit the museum, some can do more if the commitment is made. When a museum can take a step further and meet specific community goals and needs, they demonstrate their value to the community, serve new audiences, and become vital to the community. This partnership with the Greater Waco Education Alliance helped support their needs, and the museum met its goal to serve the local community in a deeper, more meaningful way by reaching out to a portion of the population who needed special attention.

Most museums today offer programs that fall under Richard Sandell's first model of social inclusion, to help meet community needs by removing potential barriers to museum visits. His second model, like the partnership program between the BPRP and the MMC, recommends that museums meet more specific and challenging needs of their communities. Museums are already creating programs and exhibitions that fall under Sandell's second model, recognizing the importance of community support. However, the third model pushes museum to offer direct services to communities that fall outside of museums' traditional missions, and potentially alter their missions to include this function.

Clearly museums are obligated to provide services to their communities, but to what extent? Can, and should, museums of the future embrace Sandell's third model to make a maximum impact on their communities? Museum education pioneers, like Anna Billings Gallup and John Cotton Dana, fought to expand the educational role that museums played in society and were criticized by their contemporaries for these seemingly radical ideas. One hundred years later, the ideas of museum leaders like Stephen Weil, Elaine Gurian, and especially Richard Sandell, are considered somewhat radical by many. Based on the urgings of these leaders, it will be interesting to see what museums look like 100 years from now. In the meantime, museums will continue to offer services to local communities, and the most effective museums will produce mission-related programs and exhibits, remaining true to who they are and why they were created, while demonstrating their purpose and value to their communities.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Educational Activity for the BPRP's first visit to the MMC

Supplemental Material

Educational Activity for the BPRP's second visit to the MMC

### **Educational Activity for the BPRP's first visit to the MMC**

**Objective:** Students will follow the instructions to find clues in each room on the Natural History side of the museum. Each clue will lead them to the next until they have found the “missing” fossil. This activity relies on sight word identification, reading comprehension and teamwork. Most of the 300 sight words are incorporated into the activity. Pairs must work together to accomplish the task.

**Theme:** Students and volunteers are detectives who have been hired to find a missing fossil in the museum. They will follow clues they find along the way. The missing object is located with their help, and they will be allowed to touch mammoth fossils after they “find” them.

**Premise:** Most students enjoy mystery books; this activity requires them assume the role of detective to solve a mystery.

### CLUE 1: Rotunda

Hello, detectives! A fossil is missing from the museum, and we need your help to find it! The museum chose you because you are the best detectives around town. We think that someone who works here moved it, but forgot where they put it! Work together to look for clues—read each clue closely to learn where to go next! Follow the red arrow to the first clue!

### CLUE 2: Cabinets of Curiosities

Welcome to the Cabinet Room. Start here! This room is full of things from nature that people collected in the past. If you open the drawers, you will find many cool, old things from our planet, and you might even find the next clue!

### CLUE 3: Drawer in Cabinet Room

Look up! Do you see the big skull above you? What do you think it is? Ask your buddy what he or she thinks. That is a mammoth head! The fossil you are looking for came from a real mammoth. You will learn more about mammoths today as you look for the fossil. Walk to the big, brown tree trunk, and look down to find another clue!

### CLUE 4: Behind tree trunk in Cabinet Room

The mammoth fossil you are looking for is very old, and came from Texas just like this tree trunk. Follow the five blue arrows into the next room, where you will find more fossils. Maybe the mammoth fossil is in there!

### CLUE 5: Cretaceous Room

Don't be scared! That creature over your head will not eat you! That is a Pliosaur, an animal that lived in Waco over 165 million years ago! When you look at the Pliosaur, what do you see? We can tell that this animal lived in the ocean, because it has fins. Do you ever see Pliosaurus in Waco today? No way! They are extinct, which means that they do not live on our planet any more. Mammoths are also extinct, which is why finding that fossil is very important! All but one of the fossils in this room came from the ocean, just like the Pliosaur. Find the footprint in this room to read the next clue!

### CLUE 6: By Acrocanthosaurus footprint

This footprint is from a real dinosaur! You can touch it! This dinosaur and the mammoth both lived on land, but not at the same time! This dinosaur footprint is over 100 million years old, but the mammoth bone we are looking for is only 10,000 years old. The missing fossil is not in this room. Keep looking! To find

the next clue, follow the eight black arrows to the next room, where you will see more cool fossils, and animals, too!

**CLUE 7: Hall of Natural History, by the Protostega Gigas**

Check out the size of this turtle! This turtle fossil was found in Waco, and lived here when Waco was under the ocean. Find one of his smaller, modern day relatives in this room, he might give you the next clue!

**CLUE 8: Hall of Natural History, White Rock Escarpment**

Great work! This small turtle is called a Red Ear Slider, and you might find some today along the Brazos River. Take a look at the animals and plants around the turtle. Have you seen them before? This window is an example of an ecosystem, which is a place where certain plants and animals live together. To check out another ecosystem, and to find the next clue, follow the 6 green arrows.

**CLUE 9: Cave**

Whoa, it is pretty dark in here! Have you ever been in a cave? It has rock formations that grow from the top, called stalactites, and some that grow from the bottom, called stalagmites. What kinds of animals live here? There is not much light inside of the cave, so very few animals can live here. Look around closely, and you might find some small animals that can live in caves. It seems like they have found a treat!

**CLUE 10: Cave, by the bats**

Bats live in caves. Some bats eat over 20,000 bugs in one night! Wow, that is a lot! You know, there is another room in this museum where you can find bats. Follow the seven white arrows to find them.

**CLUE 11: Forest**

Look up! This is a bat that we would find in a Texas forest. In this room, there are two types of Texas forests. Did you know that bats are flying mammals? Mammals are animals that have fur. Find four mammals in this room! Some are hard to find because they match the environment around them. Follow the ten red arrows to find a famous mammal.

**CLUE 12: Hall of Extinction by the Mammoth**

Wow! The famous mammal is a mammoth! Can you believe that mammoths were really this big? People are so small next to them! These big creatures ate 300 pounds of food, and could drink 40 gallons of water every day. The mammoths that lived in Waco were Columbian Mammoths, which are bigger than

Woolly Mammoths, like from Ice Age. They also did not have as much fur, since Texas is a warm place. To learn more about the mammoths that lived in Waco, follow the three yellow arrows into the next room.

#### CLUE 13: Mammoth Room- Ramp

This room is the official Waco Mammoth Site room. The bones in this room are models, and the missing mammoth fossil used to be in this room. Take a look at some of the mammoth bones. You may sit on the floor to get a closer peek. Go in, observe the room, and watch the video to learn more about mammoths. Then, look for another clue.

#### CLUE 14: Mammoth Room, by the door

Cleaning supplies! That must mean that someone who works in the museum might have moved the fossil to clean it. Please make sure it is in a safe place. Look here! A secret passage! Go through the secret passage and follow 5 green arrows.

#### CLUE 15: Hueco Grass House

This room has artifacts from the first people who lived in Texas—Native Americans and Pioneers. This room is very different from the other rooms in the museum. Can you imagine living in one of these homes? This grass house belonged to the Waco Indians, from right here in Waco! Take a look at the other houses. There is one last clue hidden in this room. Use your detective skills to find it!

#### CLUE 16: Tipi

When objects need to be cleaned, they are taken to a special place. If the bone was really taken for cleaning, you should find it there. Go through the doorway to the left, and you will find the secret location!

#### CLUE 17: Butterfly Hall

You are almost there! Fly and jump down this hall, when you find the bone we will know it is safe!

#### CLUE 18: Cart in Hallway

Great work! It looks like scientist just wanted to clean the mammoth bone, and forgot to put it away! We should be more careful next time! Thank you, we may never have found it without your help! Go down the hall and enjoy a special treat as a reward for your hard work. Keep reading!

### List of Dolch Sight Words

Pre-primer	Primer		Grade One	Grade Two		Grade Three
a	all	under	after	always	why	about
and	am	want	again	around	wish	better
away	are	was	an	because	work	bring
big	at	well	any	been	would	carry
blue	ate	went	ask	before	write	clean
can	be	what	as	best	your	cut
come	black	white	by	both		done
down	brown	who	could	buy		draw
find	but	will	every	call		drink
for	came	with	fly	cold		eight
funny	did	yes	from	does		fall
go	do		give	don't		far
help	eat		going	fast		full
here	four		had	first		got
I	get		has	five		grow
in	good		her	found		hold
is	have		him	gave		hot
it	he		his	goes		hurt
jump	into		how	green		if
little	like		just	its		keep
look	must		know	made		kind
make	new		let	many		laugh
me	no		live	off		light
my	now		may	or		long
not	on		of	pull		much
one	our		old	read		myself
play	out		once	right		never
red	please		open	sing		only
run	pretty		over	sit		own
said	ran		put	sleep		pick
see	ride		round	tell		seven
the	saw		some	their		shall*
three	say		stop	these		show
to	she		take	those		six
two	so		thank	upon		small
up	soon		them	us		start
we	that		then	use		ten
where	there		think	very		today
yellow	they		walk	wash		together
you	this		were	which		try
	too		when			warm



### **Educational Activity for the BPRP's second visit to the MMC**

**Objective:** Students will follow the instructions to find clues in several rooms of the Natural History exhibits hall of the museum. The short clue finding game relied on reading comprehension and sight word identification, and will lead the students to an activity table. They will then read age-appropriate instructions, directing them to compose labels about their favorite objects in the museum, to help with a “new exhibit.” Adult volunteers will help students follow clues and compose labels, which further enhances reading skills.

**Theme:** Students and volunteers are hired to help the museum finish a new exhibit about “Old Dr. Strecker’s Stuff.” They will help finish writing labels before the exhibit opens.

**Premise:** This activity requires students to assume a character and accomplish a fun task.

### CLUE 1: Butterfly Hall

Welcome, museum experts!

The Mayborn Museum needs your help! This museum opened over 100 years ago. Many of the awesome things here were collected all over the world by old Doctor Strecker—the scientist who used to run the place.

We are making an exhibit about the best things he found, but we are running out of time. The exhibit opens tomorrow, and we have not finished making all of the labels! Since you are museum experts, you are going to help us make labels for your favorite items.

Follow the blue arrows to see some examples around the museum, and to find the new exhibit!

### CLUE 2: Lifeways

Labels teach us about objects in the museum.  
Some labels tell stories, and some just have facts or names.

When we read the labels in this room, we can learn more about the first groups of people who lived in Texas, and what their houses looked like! Check out the label above.

Can you find another Native American house in this room? Follow the yellow arrows, and you might find another clue!

### CLUE 3: Hueco Grasshouse

Great job! This grass house belonged to Native Americans who lived in Waco, just like us! Doctor Strecker also collected many fossils and animals for people to see in the museum. Follow the red arrows to find some examples!

### CLUE 4: Prairie Diorama

This window shows us how animals and plants live together on a prairie. The book is another type of label—you may flip through it to read about the plants and animals. When you are ready for your challenge, follow the orange arrows.

### CLUE 5: Texas Forest

You found it! Behind this door you will see all of Doctor Strecker's coolest objects. Explore the two rooms full of Doctor Strecker's things, and pick your favorite object. You can grab instructions and check out an art kit from the table

to help make your label! Thanks for your help, we could not make this exhibit without you!

**Instructions for label composition activity by grade level:**

# KINDERGARTEN

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write a few words about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her FIRST NAME ONLY in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

# FIRST GRADE

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write **two to three sentences** about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her **FIRST NAME ONLY** in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

# SECOND GRADE

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write **two to three sentences** about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her **FIRST NAME ONLY** in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

## THIRD GRADE

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write **three to four sentences** about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her **FIRST NAME ONLY** in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

## FOURTH GRADE

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write **a full paragraph** about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her **FIRST NAME ONLY** in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

## FIFTH GRADE

Help your student make a "label" about his or her favorite artifact. The labels will be displayed at the Mayborn Museum over the weekend, so the students can show their parents!

**Instructions:** Encourage student to draw a picture of the object.

Help student write a **full paragraph** about the object (why they like it, what it looks like, etc).

Ask student to write his or her **FIRST NAME ONLY** in the bottom right hand corner.

Thank you for your help today!

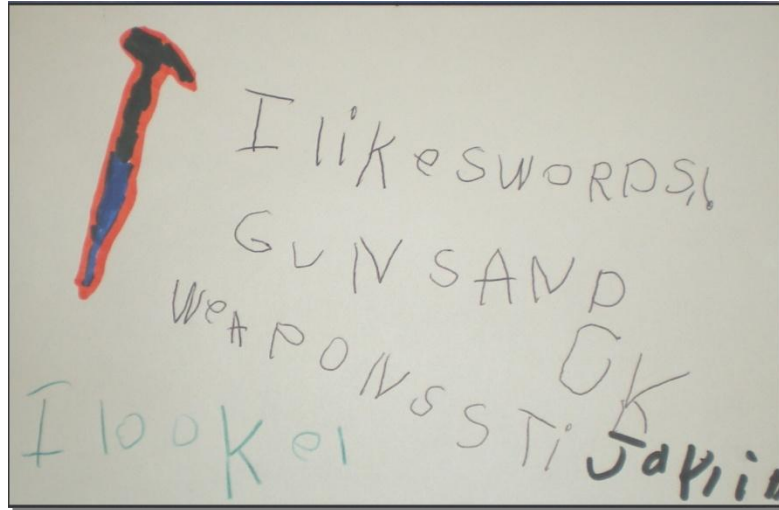
## VOLUNTEERS

Please grab the instruction sheet for your student's grade level.

The students are museum experts and are creating new labels for the artifacts in this exhibit.

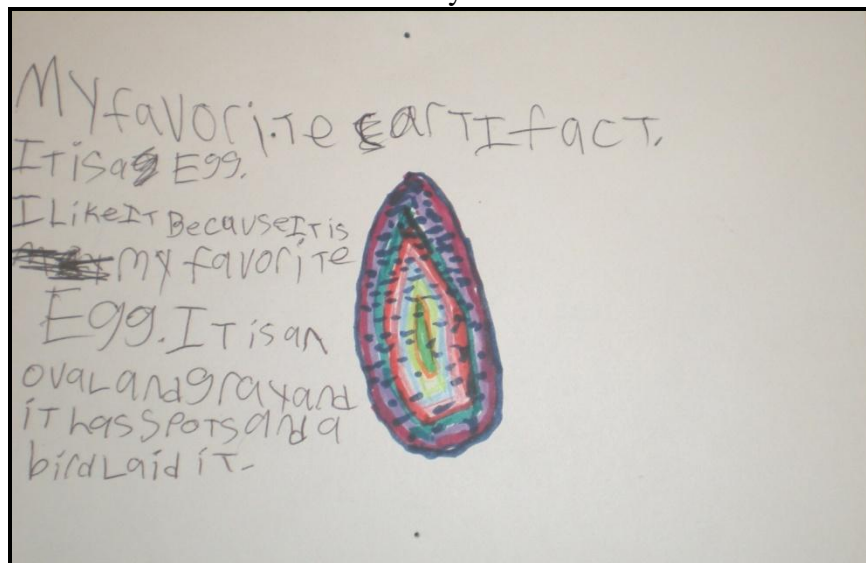
Art supplies and snacks are located in the Community Room! Have fun!

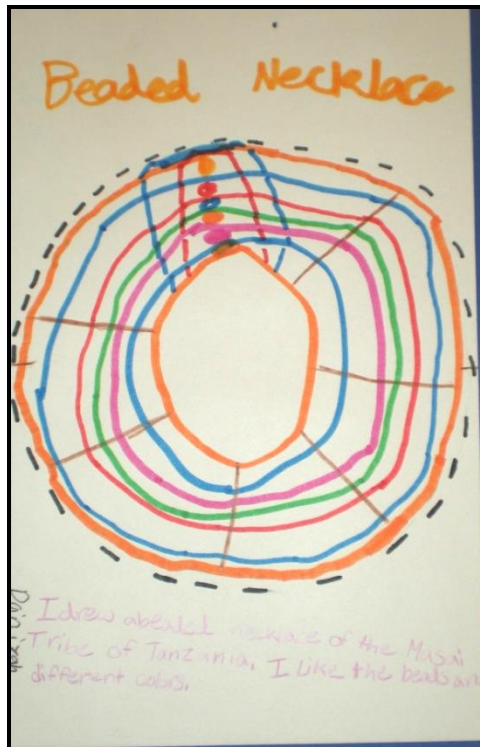
**Labels created by BPRP Students:**



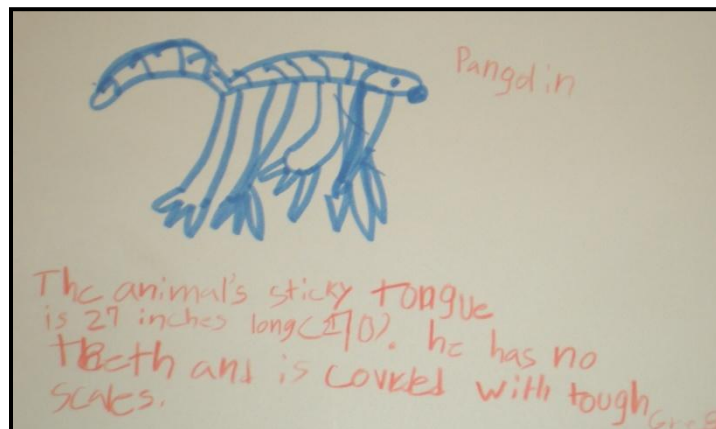
Label created by a Kindergarten Student

Label created by a 3rd Grader

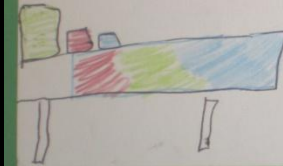




Labels created by J.H. Hines Elementary School Students for Mayborn Museum artifacts.



I Like the Native American home.  
it had a litter bed. ~~It~~ would you Live  
in a home like that?



Duranna

### Texas-tarantulas



It was Big and ugly and Black.

I chose it because it ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> 8 legs and it has  
2 colors, brown and Black. It has long legs.  
It scared me When I looked at it. It is found  
in many parts of Texas, ~~and~~ including  
Waco.

Kiyonica

My favorite was a porcupine  
because it had spines. It can  
protect it self from harm. Don't  
get too close !!!



Lordell

## APPENDIX B

### Evaluation Instruments

First Information Gathering Assessment (In-Person Interviews)

Second Information Gathering Assessment (Online Survey)

Third Information Gathering Assessment (Online Survey)

First Information Gathering Assessment: In-person Interviews with BPRP Volunteers

1. Approximately how many weeks have you read with your student?
2. How long has your student participated in the reading program?
3. What grade level is your student?
4. What grade level are you and your student reading together?
5. Does your student seem interested in reading?
6. Does your student try or seem interested in reading books above his/her reading level?
7. How many sight words can your student identify at this point? Has the number improved since you began working together?
8. Do you think your student has improved through the Reading Program? How so?
9. Do you think your student looks forward to reading every day after school? Why or why not?
10. What motivates your student to read?
11. Do prizes motivate your student to read?
12. What prizes does your student seem most excited about?
13. What types of books does your student like to read?
14. How have you bonded with your student?
15. Do you think a field trip to the museum would motivate your student to read? Why or why not?
16. Is your student willing to read and participate in the after school program?
17. Do the students seem excited to go to the Mayborn Museum?
18. What types of comments have you heard from your student about going to the museum?
19. Other comments?

Second Information Gathering Assessment:

Online Surveys for BPRP Volunteers after first trip

## Mayborn Museum/Education Alliance POST FIELD TRIP SURVEY

1.

1. Approximately how many weeks have you read with your student?

2. Did you complete a survey or an interview regarding your student's skill level BEFORE the museum field trip?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Did you attend the field trip to the Mayborn Museum?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Did you discuss the field trip with your student before they went? If so, how did he/she respond?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments

5. Would you say that your student's ability to identify sight words has improved since you began working together?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

6. Would you say your student's attitude toward reading has changed since you began working together? How so?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Comments

## Mayborn Museum/Education Alliance POST FIELD TRIP SURVEY

**7. Do you think your student was motivated to read in order to earn a field trip to the museum?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**8. Do you think your student would BE motivated to read in order to earn ANOTHER trip to the museum?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**9. Overall, do you think your student enjoyed visiting the Mayborn Museum Complex?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure  
☐ I did not attend

**10. Had your student visited the Mayborn Museum prior to this field trip?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**11. What was your student's favorite part about this particular visit? What was yours?**

	5
	6

**12. Did your student enjoy the guided activity through the museum? If so, what made it enjoyable? If not, how come?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

Comments

	5
	6

## Mayborn Museum/Education Alliance POST FIELD TRIP SURVEY

**13. Was the activity easy to complete? Please provide the grade level of your student.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure  
☐ I did not attend

Grade

**14. Did the activity prove that the student was able to identify the sight words?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure  
☐ I did not attend the field trip

**15. Who read and solved most of the clues?**

- ☐ I did  
☐ My student did  
☐ We both did  
☐ Unsure  
☐ I did not attend

**16. Did the museum field trip enhance your student's knowledge and skills? If so, can you provide an example?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

Other (please specify)

**17. Was your student excited to receive the free Mayborn family pass?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

## Mayborn Museum/Education Alliance POST FIELD TRIP SURVEY

**18. Do you think your student will talk to his/her family about visiting the museum?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**19. Do you think your student would like to come back to the museum?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**\* 20. What are your recommendations for next time? What worked well about the museum visit, and what would you like to see changed? Your honest input is very valuable to make our return visit a success! Thank you for all of your help!**

	5
	6

Third Information Gathering Assessment: Online Survey for BPRP Volunteers after second trip

1.

1. Approximately how long have you volunteered with your student?

5

6

2. Approximately how long has your student been involved with the Best Practices Reading Program?

5

6

3. Did your student attend the first field trip to the Mayborn Museum in December?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

4. Did you attend the first field trip to the Mayborn Museum in December?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I was not a volunteer last semester

5. Did you attend the field trip in February?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. What grade level is your student?

- ☐ K
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ unsure

**7. Do you think your student has improved through the Best Practices Reading Program? If so, how?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Comments

	5
	6

**8. Has your student's attitude toward reading changed since you began working together? In what way?**

- ☐ Yes, it is more positive
- ☐ Yes, it is less positive
- ☐ No, it is still negative
- ☐ Yes, it is still positive
- ☐ Unsure

Comments

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**9. What types of comments have you heard from your student about the visit to the Mayborn Museum?**

	5
	6

**10. Do you think the field trip to the Mayborn Museum enhanced or helped to evaluate the reading and/or writing skills of your student? Why or why not?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Comments

	5
	6

**11. Do you feel that you have formed a relationship with your student? Please provide an example.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

Comments

**12. Did your student seem familiar and comfortable with the Mayborn Museum? How?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

Comments

	5
	6

**13. Was the activity appropriate for the grade level of your student? Why or why not?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure  
☐ Did not attend

Comments

	5
	6

**\* 14. What was your student's favorite part of the visit? What was yours?**

	5
	6

**15. Did your student express interest in returning to the museum with his or her family?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

Comments

**16. Did the field trip impact your student's desire to learn?**

- ☐ Positive impact
- ☐ Negative impact
- ☐ No impact whatsoever
- ☐ Unsure

**17. Do you think the museum is a good community partner for the Greater Waco Education Alliance? Why or why not?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Comments

**18. What would you have changed about the trip? Any suggestions or other comments?**  
**Thanks for your help!**

	5
	6