



National Medal for Museum and Library Service



2024 PROGRAM





The IMLS National Medal is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums, a tribute to how they are making a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the country.

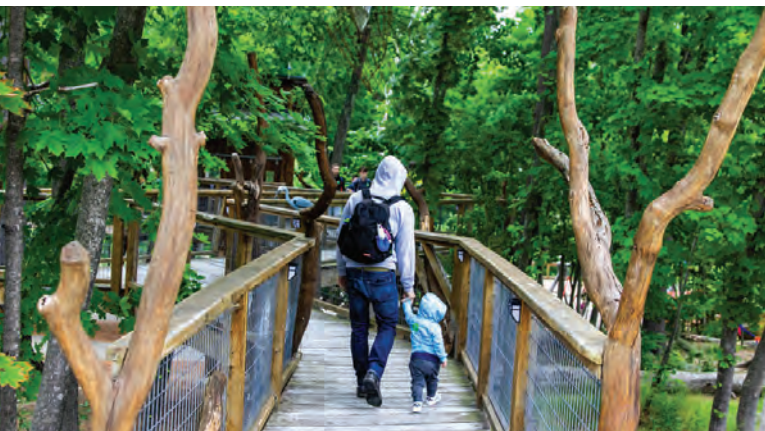
INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

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IMLS will provide an audio recording of this publication upon request.

Special thanks to the entire staff at the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year marks the 30th anniversary of IMLS's National Medal for Museum and Library Service program. Since 1994, 222 institutions have received this honor and only twice has an institution received a National Medal more than once.

For 2024 we are so lucky to have a tremendously diverse group of award recipients who represent different areas of our great country, and in ways large and small, are enriching Americans' lives, how they engage with history and art, how they learn and thrive, and how they connect with their larger community.

These incredible institutions invite in learners of all ages and abilities, from near and far every day with a mission to make a difference in people's lives. To inspire them to think and consider other perspectives, embrace stories, and allow them to explore.

Whether it's from the lush gardens promoting human and environmental well-being in Pennsylvania to an immersive desert space engaging families in conservation in Arizona, or a 19th century library working with incarcerated persons in Massachusetts to a rural community's cornerstone of enrichment in Michigan, these museums and libraries are working with communities to expand discussions around critical topics.

Each person who walks through their doors is welcomed and embraced. Staff are genuinely excited to greet visitors, to open their eyes and show them new worlds, or just help them navigate their own.

In short, libraries and museums are where magic happens.

Museums and libraries have always been safe spaces for each of us to celebrate and appreciate our humanity. Their impact is felt across the miles, across generations, and across societal divides.



Cyndee Landrum
*Acting Director, Institute of Museum
and Library Services*





ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

Tucson, AZ

ADDRESS: 2021 N. KINNEY ROAD, TUCSON AZ 85743

PHONE: 520-883-2702

WEB: WWW.DESERTMUSEUM.ORG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CRAIG IVANYI

The fact that the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is called a museum sometimes confuses its visitors; it is a complex, nontraditional space, immersed in the desert that it represents. The museum focuses specifically on the Tucson region in a holistic way by blending natural and cultural elements to create a rich, unique story and illustrate critical ecological context.

CONNECTING KIDS TO CONSERVATION

Executive Director Craig Ivanyi has seen firsthand the positive impact that programs like Earth Camp have had on children who love animals and being outdoors. Over the years, it's been a delight for him to see kids find friends who also like to talk about nature and the importance of conservation, then bring those discussions back to their families. "Years ago, I received an email from a 5-year-old boy who lives in New York and had questions about snakes. I just got another email from him—he's nine now and still loves snakes," he said. "That made my day." Ivanyi also knows that making learning fun and accessible is key to making a greater impact, which is why the museum also partners with school districts to bring animals to classrooms on educational visits.

MAKING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

The Desert Museum has a long history of working with Native American Tribes, and staff members continuously work to create and maintain those relationships. As part of a multi-year research approach to fostering deeper diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, the museum recently changed its admission policy. Since the museum resides on their land, Native Americans can now visit the museum free of charge. Since January, 1,200 individuals have already taken advantage of this new offer.

"I love seeing museum visitors that don't show up thinking about nature or conservation and walk away as the greatest advocates you could have. We celebrate the Sonoran Desert and then in a larger context, **remind people of the value of nature** and being a part of making sure that it's there for future generations." — **Craig Ivanyi, Executive Director**





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Unlike the many outdoor exhibits with live animals, the indoor play space Packrat Playhouse lets children explore the desert through the eyes of this small creature. Kids can slide down a 15-foot Gila monster tail, scramble over a 40-foot Diamondback rattlesnake, and climb through prickly pear cacti while learning how packrats serve as a window into the history of the Sonoran area. The exhibit also offers a Packrat Protocol—guidance on coexisting with wildlife and best practices for how to humanely keep these cute critters from destroying property.

FUTURE PLANS

Change is coming to the desert. This fall, the museum will introduce an animatronic dinosaur exhibit—Ancient Arizona—which will teach visitors about prehistoric Arizona. In addition, following an organization-wide assessment of animal well-being, plans to expand the Mexican wolf exhibit to be around eight times its current size have also started. “I’m really excited about things that give the animals a voice. When we start looking at communities, that’s one that we sometimes forget,” Ivanyi said. “We need to give them a voice so that they can talk to us in a way that we can understand.”





CHILDREN'S MUSEUM HOUSTON

Houston, TX

ADDRESS: 1500 BINZ STREET, HOUSTON, TX 77004

PHONE: 713-522-1138

WEB: WWW.CMHOUSTON.ORG

CEO: RAYANNE DARENSBOURG

Children and families are the heartbeat of Children's Museum Houston. Everything the museum does is with the visitor experience in mind, with children and families at the core of its programming. The museum provides hands-on experiences and opportunities for children to explore their world and beyond throughout its 45,000 square feet of space.

QUINTESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Each gallery in the Children's Museum seeks to answer questions that children are curious about: How does it work? Where does it come from? How are we alike? How are we different? To ensure that each of the 13 exhibits are child-centered, the museum has 13 full-time educators—team members with advanced degrees who bring their knowledge and experiences to the programming. Some examples include a lab with a biologist who can explain experiments, as well as an outdoor space with a pond, where another experienced team member engages with the flora and fauna to share the importance of caring for the environment.

PARTNERING TO MEET NEEDS

With an expected 700,000 visitors this year, and another 200,000 engaged through outreach programs, the museum serves a diverse population in Houston. To meet their needs, they partner with local, trusted organizations. Thanks to a collaboration with a network of more than 1,200 nonprofit social service agencies, 35 percent of community visitors are able to visit the museum free of charge. The museum also has partnerships with over 17 school districts in Houston, which allow them to visit schools and bring tabletop science and early literacy activities into a cafeteria or an auditorium. There, parents, grandparents, teachers, and children can build on concepts that children have been introduced to in school.



"Our museum has a playful, unconventional appearance and approach. One of my favorite moments was when I was standing outside and overheard a little boy tugging on his mom's shirt share, **'Mommy, this is exactly what I dreamed of last night. Let's go in.'**" — Rayanne Darensbourg, CEO



INCITING CURIOSITY AND FOSTERING INCLUSION

Children's Museum wants to ensure that every child in Houston has an opportunity to explore the best learning resources. "I hope that we provide children a safe space to explore early science concepts and be introduced to cultural and arts programming, and that parents leave with the confidence to be their child's first and most influential teacher," said CEO Rayanne Darensbourg. "Many of our visitors are visiting a museum for the first time and we want everyone to leave here feeling that they were welcomed, they belong, and they can come back."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Kidtropolis is a city for kids, run by kids. It mirrors a real city where children choose what they want to be and work with others to make it function, with nine businesses and over two dozen job opportunities. Children are exposed to different career paths while learning about financial literacy, including how to manage a bank account. Jobs range from a meteorologist or an editor in a newsroom to a clerk at a grocery store or a chef at a restaurant. This role-playing offers endless opportunities for children to use different skills and extend classroom learning, such as applying math concepts while paying for groceries or civic studies while visiting city hall.





COPPER QUEEN LIBRARY

Bisbee, AZ

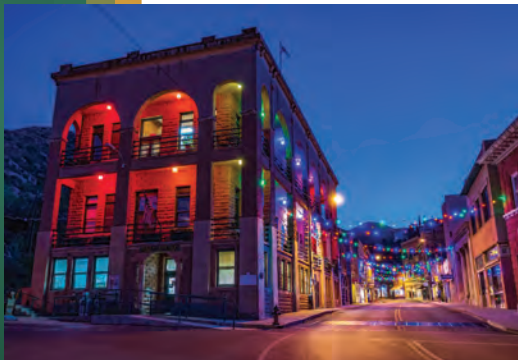
ADDRESS: 6 MAIN STREET, BISBEE, AZ 85603

PHONE: 520-432-4232

WEB: WWW.BISBEEAZ.GOV/2155/COPPER-QUEEN-LIBRARY

LIBRARY MANAGER: JASON MACOVIAK

Copper Queen Library has been around since before Arizona was a state, making it the oldest continuously operating library in the area. With a collection dating from the early days of Bisbee to the present, the small staff works tirelessly to evolve with their community and provide the resources they need.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Copper Queen Library Annex, developed in collaboration with the Bisbee Unified School District, transformed a decommissioned middle school into a vibrant community hub in late 2018. Initially serving as a single classroom library for early literacy outreach in an underserved neighborhood, it has since grown into a fully fledged library with expanded adult literacy programming. Through grants and local partnerships, the space now hosts a unique collection of books and DVDs, catering to diverse interests. A special highlight is the Childhood Patio, which provides an inviting outdoor setting for young readers. With no public preschool facilities in the community, the Annex fills a need by preparing children for school.

REVITALIZING RESOURCES

In 2023, Copper Queen joined forces with the Rural Health Center at the University of Arizona to enhance patrons' access to vital health and wellness resources. This partnership led to the creation of the "Tough Topics" collection, offering materials on sensitive subjects like divorce, addiction, and suicide. The grant was utilized to expand and update the collection, ensuring it remains relevant and comprehensive. To promote privacy and independence, bookmarks listing essential Dewey Decimal numbers were created, enabling patrons to explore these resources discreetly at their convenience.



"Small libraries are not just surviving but are thriving. I think what makes us so special is our community. It is our responsibility as a library to be a central point where people can come for resources and to connect." – **Jason Macoviak, Library Manager**





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Copper Queen Library is committed to compiling resources that feature characters who promote inclusivity and representation within the community. Located just four miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, the library's goal is to ensure everyone feels represented. In recent years, they've carefully reviewed their extensive collection, spanning picture books and beyond, to ensure individuals from diverse backgrounds see themselves reflected in the library. "That's been a huge focus for us over the last few years," Library Manager Jason Macoviak said. "We feel that is one of the most important parts of our job."

POWERFUL PHOTOGRAPHY

In collaboration with the Inside Out Project, the library launched the "Freedom to Read" art installation last year. This initiative aimed to empower the Bisbee community by engaging with local schools and community members of all ages to capture images of children and librarians proudly holding their favorite books. These photographs, enlarged to 3x4 feet, were displayed along the local public school bus route, allowing children to see themselves and their friends in a mural that offers a visual celebration of reading freedom and the fight against censorship.





DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Washington, DC

ADDRESS: 901 G STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20001

PHONE: 202-727-0321

WEB: WWW.DCLIBRARY.ORG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RICHARD REYES-GAVILAN

The DC Public Library (DCPL) spans the city of Washington, DC, with 26 branches, ensuring nearly every neighborhood has access to its services. Prioritizing inclusion and accessibility in all they do, DCPL is committed to serving all District residents regardless of ZIP code.



ATTENTION TO ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to traditional library offerings such as continuing education and disability-related programming, DCPL is dedicated to meeting the needs of all DC residents, wherever they may be. Since 2017, the Library's Outreach and Inclusion Team has worked to connect with individuals who may encounter barriers to accessing library facilities. The District is home to many diverse and non-English speaking communities, including Spanish, French, Amharic, and Chinese speakers. DCPL's revamped website prioritizes accessibility for low-vision and keyboard-only users and features instant translation capabilities for non-English speakers.

FUNDRAISING FRIENDS

"Friends" groups consisting of dedicated volunteers at each branch support local programming and system-wide reading initiatives by finding new and innovative ways to raise funds and awareness. "What's More Punk than the Public Library" t-shirts, designed and sold by the Mount Pleasant Library Friends to promote DCPL's punk music archive, have become a popular item for library enthusiasts nationwide.



"DC Public Library, I believe, is the most cherished institution in Washington, DC, that is **built and funded primarily for the use, enjoyment, and betterment of District residents**. People think of Washington, DC, as the town where the White House is. DCPL is concerned with the people who have been here for, in some cases, generations. The library system is an incredible point of pride for residents." — **Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Executive Director**





TEACHING TECH

In addition to offering high-speed Wi-Fi and computer access across branches, DCPL has forged partnerships with other District agencies to distribute 10,000 internet-enabled Chromebooks to eligible residents. Through the “Tech Together” initiative, aimed at bridging the digital divide, residents receive necessary virtual literacy skills. Collaborating agencies like the DC Department of Human Services and Office of Returning Citizens aid DCPL in identifying those who may need the program most. Executive Director Richard Reyes-Gavilan emphasized the community support, saying, “It is our work with our local partners that I think really elevates us.” Furthermore, a cohort of five Digital Navigators offers personalized technology assistance on demand. These Navigators engage in an average of 350 interactions with library users per week, providing invaluable support.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

During the height of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020, DCPL took action to ensure free, unlimited, and simultaneous access to anti-racism electronic books. The collection featured more than 300 titles for all ages including, “A is for Activist,” “Kindred,” “Me and White Supremacy,” “Unapologetic,” “Why We Can’t Wait,” and “White Fragility.” These resources were circulated more than 60,000 times throughout the year, offering essential context and education for residents.





DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Acton, MA

ADDRESS: 177 MAIN STREET (ROUTE 27) ACTON, MA 01720

PHONE: 978-264-4200

WEB: WWW.DISCOVERYACTON.ORG

CEO: MARIE BEAM

Discovery Museum stands up for kids and stands up for science. Serving more than 250,000 people a year, its founding values are to provide joyful and enriching experiences to children, families, students, and caregivers—both in the museum and in school classrooms across Massachusetts. They also produce all of their own electricity through an on-site solar array, and their excess green energy powers four Massachusetts nonprofits and the homes of 11 low-income families.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Open year-round, the museum's Discovery Woods is a beautiful nature playscape designed to be universally accessible and to help all children take meaningful and appropriate risks. It features a classroom-sized, wheels-accessible treehouse that sits 15 feet in the air, creating an idyllic and whimsical feeling for its visitors. Since playing in nature has significant mental health benefits for children—and their adults—the experiences that happen in Discovery Woods are more important than ever before.

THE POWER OF DISCOVERY

Discovery Museum doesn't just impact its patrons; as CEO, Marie Beam's life also has been transformed by the museum. "I raised my children here. I have pictures of my now 14-year-old playing in an exhibit gallery that is now my office," she said. "It's an incredible place that brings people in and holds on to them. We make friends everywhere we go as an organization, and I think that's because our work is rooted in connection, joy, happiness, possibility, and potential."



"Kids are driven to play by their naturally abundant creativity and curiosity; it's critical to their growth and development. After visiting us, **I hope everyone takes home the happiness that playing and discovering creates**, and that it makes them seek out that joy again—not just here, but everywhere." — **Marie Beam, CEO**



ENCOURAGING EXPLORATION FOR ALL

Since 2016, the museum's 4.5-acre campus has been fully renovated so that every part of the property is accessible to all visitors across physical, neurological, and developmental diversity. This change was the result of a program that started years before—*Especially for Me*—which is hosted outside public hours for families with children who benefit from a more controlled visiting experience. They also offer *Especially for Me* families free memberships for visitation during public hours.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Discovery Museum's Traveling Science Workshops program has been bringing hands-on STEM explorations—aligned to the state curriculum standards—into pre-K to eighth grade classrooms across Massachusetts and beyond for 31 years. An incredibly equitable way to reach all kids and build STEM confidence, in 2023 they reached more than 2,700 classrooms and 53,500 students—including students who might not have had access to this type of learning experience.





GRISWOLD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Colrain, MA

ADDRESS: 12 MAIN ROAD, COLRAIN, MA 01340

PHONE: 413-624-3619

WEB: COLRAIN-MA.GOV/P/27/GRISWOLD-MEMORIAL-LIBRARY

LIBRARY DIRECTOR: CHELSEA JORDAN-MAKELY

The Griswold Memorial Library in itself is a sight to behold, with a stunning stained-glass dome ceiling, mosaic floors, and original artwork dating back to 1908 hanging on the walls. Outside, a buzzing pollinator garden adds to the charm. According to Library Director Chelsea Jordan-Makely, "Visitors come to Colrain just to see the building!" With future plans to add more gathering spaces, the building stands as a testament to the staff's dedication to evolving with the community.

PROVIDING FOR ALL PATRONS

As a community-driven, grassroots library that thrives on collective effort, Griswold Memorial takes a sustainable approach to serving Colrain and the wider area. Collaborating with partners like the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the Belding Memorial Library in Ashfield, they work to provide resources to incarcerated individuals and those at the re-entry center. As one of the few small and rural libraries engaged in this work, Griswold offers a powerful program called "Read to the Children." In this initiative, caregivers who are incarcerated work with local partners to record themselves reading a book for their child, who then receives both the book and the recording. "It's really important for all libraries to realize that this is a part of our mandate," said Jordan-Makely. "These are patrons, and 95 percent of people who are incarcerated are going to return to our communities."

COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

The Carol Purington Poetry Collective honors Carol Purington, a beloved Colrain resident who grew up next to the library. Despite her confinement to an iron lung after contracting polio, Carol found solace in writing poetry. Her words touched the lives of many, including those of students and incarcerated individuals. Inspired by Griswold's "Dial-a-Poem" initiative during the pandemic, Carol envisioned a poetry collective with the residents of Colrain. After her passing in late 2020, the community established the collective in her memory. Monthly gatherings are held virtually, where participants share poems in her honor, beginning with Carol's work before sharing their own. Carol's story is further explored on "The People's History of Colrain" podcast created by the library, featuring local musicians and preserving resident stories.

"Our collection is community-driven. We're here for everybody! We're here to save you money and to make your life better. Libraries can help. **We want people to always be able to walk into this library and feel a sense of belonging.**"

— Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Library Director





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Griswold hosts an annual celebration for William Apess Day, a prominent figure in local Indigenous history. Led by delegates from the Mashpee and Wampanoag Tribes, the community gathers to honor Apess's life and legacy through various activities, this year including performances of selections from the play "We Are the Land." Apess was born in Colrain and co-authored the Mashpee Declaration of Independence with "Blind Joe" Amos of Mashpee on May 21, 1833. "It's the highlight of my career to be able to create this space for people to share these stories," said Jordan-Makely. "It's incredibly meaningful work."

HEARTWARMING HISTORY

Established in 1892 and constructed in 1908, Griswold Memorial Library is a historic institution. Serving 1,600 residents across 43 square miles, the library stands as one of the few touchpoints in an area without a community center. According to Jordan-Makely, "It really is the heart of our town and it's always been a gathering place for people." For residents who aren't able to visit the library, the staff conduct outreach at the local transfer station as well as a nearby orchard, where they have a "storywalk" and host outdoor events.





HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Houston, TX

ADDRESS: 5749 SOUTH LOOP E, HOUSTON, TX 77033

PHONE: 713-274-6600

WEB: HCPL.NET

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: EDWARD MELTON

With over 4 million patrons across one of the largest counties in the U.S., Harris County Public Library (HCPL) knows the importance of providing a diverse array of resources, programs, and services tailored to meet the needs of its community. With a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, the library provides a welcoming space where individuals of all ages and backgrounds can explore, discover, and connect.



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

Launched in 2022, the Emergency Connectivity Fund is one of HCPL's groundbreaking initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide and enhancing access to essential resources for all Harris County residents. Spearheaded by collaborative efforts from more than 20 community partners, it addresses the pressing need for connectivity in the increasingly digital world. Successfully distributing over 70,000 devices, the Fund seeks to ensure that individuals across Harris County have equitable access to workforce development opportunities, literacy services, and digital resources. By empowering patrons with the tools and skills necessary to navigate the digital landscape, it plays a pivotal role in promoting digital equity by fostering inclusive growth and development throughout the county. Looking ahead, HCPL is committed to expanding infrastructure to enhance connectivity and further support those in need.

BRINGING BOOKS TO KIDS

Partnering with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, HCPL created "Curiosity Cruisers." These state-of-the-art mobile units bring the joy of reading and learning directly to neighborhoods and provide Harris County's children with access to books and educational programming. Each child can keep one free book per visit, building their own at-home library. Incorporating STEAM activities onboard, the "Curiosity Cruisers" create an inviting space for children to explore and learn outside of the classroom. "We are planting a seed for the future in terms of the value of libraries. That is so fulfilling for me to be a part of," said Executive Director Edward Melton. "I've been on site when a cruiser comes in—it's like the ice cream truck!"



"Harris County Public Library's mission is to enrich lives and strengthen libraries. Harris County is one of the largest counties in the country and we strive to meet people where they are. We customize our services to cater to individual needs throughout the community. It's not about the numbers. **It's about the experience.**" — *Edward Melton, Executive Director*



CELEBRATING CREATIVITY

When COVID-19 shut down in-person events, HCPL began hosting virtual author talks to provide entertainment to their patrons at home. This grew into an annual “Authorama” to celebrate popular authors and books through interviews, readings, and Q&As. In partnership with the Library Speakers Consortium, HCPL recently expanded the program by launching Authorama365 as a virtual and free way to connect with writers and thought leaders year-round and on-demand. Featured authors have included Andrew Aydin (“March”), Gloria Chao (“Rent a Boyfriend”), Saeed Jones (“How We Fight for Our Lives”), Caroline Kepnes (the “You” series), Yaa Gyasi (“Transcendent Kingdom”), and David Yoon (“Super Fake Love Song”).



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Harris County Public Library is dedicated to accessible education with programs such as GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and citizenship classes. Emblematic of this commitment is the inspiring journey of a woman who immigrated and found her educational path at HCPL. With perseverance, she thrived in her ESL and citizenship classes, mastering English and attaining citizenship in her new home. From a community with limited educational opportunities for women, she pursued her dream of a high school diploma—ultimately achieving it and opening doors for herself and her family. Today, she actively engages in HCPL’s community, participating in initiatives like the Growing Readers program and nurturing her children’s love for learning and reading at a young age.





KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY

Comstock Park, MI

ADDRESS: 814 W RIVER CENTER DRIVE NE, COMSTOCK PARK, MI 49321

PHONE: 616-784-2007

WEB: KDL.ORG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: LANCE WERNER

With 295,000 people participating in their programs last year, Kent District Library (KDL) is an indispensable resource for patrons of all ages and backgrounds. A local cornerstone of educational enrichment and cultural development, KDL is dedicated to fostering a love for learning and empowering all. From innovative eSports programming to event partnerships, KDL is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive space where everyone can thrive.

CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL

Amid the pandemic, Michigan faced widespread shutdowns, resulting in many library patrons losing internet access. With schools and essential services moving online, the lack of connectivity posed a serious obstacle for many. Recognizing this urgent need, Kent District Library stepped in to provide Wi-Fi hotspots to those in the rural northern region of the county, where internet access was particularly scarce. This initiative played a crucial role in ensuring that students could continue their education remotely, and individuals could access vital resources like benefits and telehealth services. As a result, their Wi-Fi hotspots quickly emerged as a sought-after item, serving as a lifeline for those in isolated communities, bridging the digital divide, and fostering a sense of connectivity and resilience during challenging times.

ACCESSIBLE SUMMER CONCERTS

The Concerts for the Community initiative, in partnership with Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park and the Steve & Amy Van Andel Foundation, is one of KDL's most popular programs. Attracting a diverse audience that may not have otherwise been able to attend such events, this initiative extends access to musical performances, fostering inclusivity and broadening participation. The annual Fifth Third Bank Summer Concerts at Meijer Gardens boasts a lineup of top-tier national and international musicians, captivating



audiences of all ages and musical tastes. Spanning from June to September, the initiative "levels the playing field," says Executive Director Lance Werner. "It brings a whole new group of people into those events."



"People in our area think of the library as a friend and a part of their family. I think this is the most important part of what we do. Our saying here is, **'We further all people through kindness, empathy, and love.'** We've made this giant effort to make sure we are meeting people where they are and that nobody gets left behind."

— **Lance Werner, Executive Director**



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Kent District Library is diving into the world of eSports, eager to help patrons make connections and explore career opportunities. From organized teams to college programs that offer scholarships, eSports break down barriers of geography, appearance, and age, promoting inclusivity and equity in the virtual world. This field can open up new opportunities for people from all backgrounds to follow their passions. There are many potential career paths in eSports, not just in playing the games, but also in design, programming, and other behind-the-scenes roles. "The things we get stuck on societally don't matter in that environment," says Werner. "It's a growing field where people can connect."

SUMMER WONDER

Kent District Library proudly offers the most extensive summer reading program in the state and is on the verge of surpassing pre-pandemic participation numbers for Summer Wonder

2024. Emphasizing the importance of literacy as a family value, this program is tailored to accommodate various learning styles and keep families engaged throughout the summer. Participants who complete the program receive prizes, and all students have access to free summer lunches, ensuring a rewarding and inclusive experience for everyone involved.





THE LOUIS ARMSTRONG HOUSE MUSEUM

Queens, NY

Among the reverberations of slavery and during the fight for civil rights, Louis Armstrong became America's first Black popular music icon. From his roots in New Orleans, he came to live in New York with his wife, Lucille, for nearly 30 years. Their home is now The Louis Armstrong House Museum, which celebrates his life and legacy.



"There's a reason why his music and impact were so significant. It reflected what was happening in our country while he was alive from 1900–1971. This amazing Black musician—who did not graduate from fifth grade and who grew up in abject poverty—became the famous

Louis Armstrong. **The genius of the music within that context is important.**" — Regina Bain, Executive Director

FOSTERING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Decades in the making, The Louis Armstrong Center opened in 2023. It sits across the street from the historic house and comprises a 60,000-piece archive—the largest of any jazz musician. Its opening has allowed the museum to grow its programs exponentially; in addition to preserving the legacy of Armstrong through guided tours of the house, this 75-seat venue offers performances, lectures, films, and educational experiences, as well as a residency program where artists conduct research in the archives and create new works based on their discoveries.

CONTINUATION OF COMMUNITY

Executive Director Regina Bain credits community persistence for sustaining the museum. After Louis and Lucille passed away in 1971 and 1983, respectively, there was a period of time before the city of New York could work out the details for their house to become a museum. Community members stepped up and maintained the property to ensure it was ready to move forward. Today, Bain is thankful to the museum's community of volunteers who donate their time to give intimate, guided tours through the historic property.



ADDRESS: 34-56 107TH STREET, QUEENS, NY 11368

PHONE: 718-478-8274

WEB: WWW.LOUISARMSTRONGHOUSE.ORG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: REGINA BAIN



CAPTURING CRUCIAL STORIES

The museum is in the process of collecting oral histories to build its new Corona collection—a way to capture the memories of those who remember Armstrong from when they were kids on the block. These narratives tell us the stories of why his legacy is so important, and how it has shaped the community they still call home today.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Next door to the historic house is the Armstrong Garden—a space that hosts outdoor concerts for up to 200 children from local public schools. Bain explained that there is symbiosis within their musical neighborhood; music that comes from the block starts after their concerts finish in the evenings. “It’s about listening to each other, talking to our neighbors and inviting them over, and being there for one another,” she said. The neighborhood connections fostered by the garden space run deep. Community member James Blake grew up next door to the Armstrongs in the space where the garden now sits. When his family’s home fell into disrepair and was torn down by the city, the Armstrongs played a role in helping support him and his brother. Blake eventually returned to the block to attend a concert, and lead everyone in a dance.





PHIPPS CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

Pittsburgh, PA

ADDRESS: 1 SCHENLEY DRIVE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15213

PHONE: 412-622-6914

WEB: WWW.PHIPPS.CONSERVATORY.ORG

PRESIDENT AND CEO: RICHARD PIACENTINI

At over 130 years old, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens was a gift to the City of Pittsburgh from Henry Phipps, one of Andrew Carnegie's partners in the steel business. Today, it inspires and educates through the beauty and importance of plants, advances sustainability and promotes human and environmental well-being through action and research, and celebrates its historic glasshouse.

ENVISIONING A GREENER FUTURE

In 2012, Phipps opened what President and CEO Richard Piacentini considers the museum's flagship project—the Center for Sustainable Landscapes, which generates all of its own energy and treats all storm and sanitary water captured on site. It is the first and only building to meet seven of the highest green certifications: the Living Building Challenge, LEED Platinum, WELL Building Platinum, Zero Energy Certification, SITES Platinum, Fitwel 3 Star and BREEAM Outstanding In-Use. "We're excited about our focus on human and environmental health at Phipps, and the way we're able to showcase that through the beauty of a garden and museum," Piacentini said.

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Phipps stretches 15 acres, including a 14-room glasshouse and 23 distinct gardens. With its industry-leading sustainable architecture and green practices, exclusive commissioned exhibits, and renowned orchid and bonsai collections, it's clear that the conservatory's key focus is to connect people to the beauty of plants and nature. Looking back, Phipps was created at a time when people thought there was no limit to the amount of natural resources we could use. "People thought we were going to conquer nature, and now I think most of us realize that we're not going to conquer nature—we have to figure out how we can live in harmony with nature," Piacentini explained. "The conservatory created a place where people could enjoy the beauty of nature and get away from the smog of the city."

"Museums are some of the most trusted organizations in their communities. There's an incredible opportunity to engage people and show them that there are things that we can do to address climate change. I mean, **who wouldn't want to live in a place that's healthier for themselves?**"

— Richard Piacentini, President and CEO





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

The seasonal, year-round flower shows at Phipps have captivated crowds for over 125 years. Generations of families return annually to participate in the tradition of experiencing the stunning displays that mean so much to this community. Due to high demand, the shows have increased to up to five times a year, including a new winter light garden that is so popular it requires timed entry tickets.



COLLABORATING FOR THE CLIMATE

One of Phipps' biggest collaborations right now is with the Climate Toolkit, an opportunity for museums, gardens, and zoos who want to address climate change within their own organizations and inspire the communities they serve to follow the Phipps lead. At the forefront of addressing this critical matter, Phipps is thinking from a regenerative point of view and working to decarbonize their own conservatory, which means converting the old glass space to be electric.



NATIONAL MEDAL FINALISTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2024 FINALISTS

Thirty institutions were named finalists for the 2024 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. From them, this year's ten winners were selected. Through the online Share Your Story initiative, museum and library community members highlighted ways these remarkable institutions have transformed their lives.

Libraries

Azalea Regional Library System (Sparta, GA)
 Chapel Hill Public Library (Chapel Hill, NC)
 Copper Queen Library (Bisbee, AZ)
 DC Public Library (Washington, DC)
 East Brunswick Public Library (East Brunswick, NJ)
 Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore, MD)
 Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library (Gloucester, MA)
 Griswold Memorial Library (Colrain, MA)
 Harris County Public Library (Houston, TX)
 The Jane Stern Dorado Community Library (Dorado, Puerto Rico)
 Kent District Library (Comstock Park, MI)
 Lambertville Free Public Library (Lambertville, NJ)
 Mesa County Libraries (Grand Junction, CO)
 San Diego County Library (San Diego, CA)
 Worcester Public Library (Worcester, MA)

Museums

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (Tucson, AZ)
 Bay Area Discovery Museum (Sausalito, CA)
 California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco, CA)
 Children's Museum Houston (Houston, TX)
 Discovery Museum (Acton, MA)
 El Paso Museum of History (El Paso, TX)
 Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (Powell, WY)
 Hočokata Tí (Shakopee, MN)
 Lincoln Park Zoo (Chicago, IL)
 The Louis Armstrong House Museum (Queens, NY)
 The Mariners' Museum and Park (Newport News, VA)
 Museum of Idaho (Idaho Falls, ID)
 Museum of Us (San Diego, CA)
 Orlando Science Center (Orlando, FL)
 Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (Pittsburgh, PA)





THE NATIONAL MEDAL FOR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICE

Since 1994, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service has honored outstanding institutions that have made significant contributions to their communities. Selected institutions demonstrate innovative approaches and a strong commitment to public service and community outreach. They are active in urban, rural, or tribal areas and engage with their communities in diverse ways, including by enhancing literacy, providing services to at-risk populations, supporting digital connectivity, and curating community narratives. The winners are selected by the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in consultation with the National Museum and Library Services Board.

THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov.

NATIONAL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES BOARD

The National Museum and Library Services Board is an advisory body that includes the IMLS director; deputy directors of the offices of museum and library services; general counsel; and presidentially appointed members of the general public who have demonstrated expertise in, or commitment to, library or museum services. Informed by its collective experience and knowledge, the board advises the IMLS director on general policy and practices, and on selections for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Chairperson

Cyndee Landrum, Acting Director, Institute of Museum and Library Services*

Members

Brian Allen, Vermont

Joan Breier Brodsky, Illinois

Susan Lynn Gibbons, Connecticut

Amy Elizabeth Gilman, Wisconsin

William T. Harris, Texas

Lisa R. Hathaway, Florida

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Halona Norton-Westbrook, Hawaii

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Mónica Ramírez-Montagut, New York

Timothy D. Murray, Delaware

Ramiro S. Salazar, Texas

Anthony Smith, IMLS*

Calvin D. Trowbridge III, IMLS*

**Nonvoting members*



The mission of IMLS is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. The agency's four strategic goals are to Champion Lifelong Learning, Strengthen Community Engagement, Advance Collections Stewardship and Access, and Demonstrate Excellence in Public Service.

Learn more at: **www.imls.gov/about**

