PRAISE FOR CHILDREN’S MUSEUM OF PITTSBURGH

“My family loves coming to Braille Story Time at the Museum. My sister and I listened to Joyce read as children and now we bring our kids to experience the magic of the Museum.”
— Visitor Review, January 2018

“We’ve been to several explore and learn museums in the past few years and I can honestly say that this is the best one yet. The amount of hands-on interaction and instruction provided by the facility is unsurpassed. There’s plenty of room to quietly occupy a child or to let the more adventurous ones blow off steam.”
— MattMingYu, TripAdvisor Review, December 2018

“This is an expansive children’s museum and only growing. From Mr. Rogers puppets to Thomas the Train, you will find amazing areas for your kids to explore. Very interactive and it has sections for all kids up to the age of about 11 or 12. They are expanding into another building that will open in 2019 and make this the largest childrens campus in the US.”
— CloseToHomeblog, TripAdvisor Review, June 2018

“From paintings that come alive to the room that appears to defy gravity; from watching puppets mimic your dance moves to the projection screen that allows you to find yourself in countless forms you will be constantly delighted and surprised at the countless optical illusions this museum has to offer. There is also an adventure in every corner where one can immerse oneself in very unique environments with cool special effects. I’ve also heard, through word of mouth, that this museum is also constantly evolving so that the exhibits that they have here are always cutting edge. I would strongly encourage anyone, even if you don’t have kids, go check this place out!”
— Rachel, Yelp Review, October 2018

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TALES OF 2018
To those who are young and young at heart.
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh: 2018 Annual Report

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For information: Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, 10 Children's Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212; pittsburghkids.org
Short stories written by Laura SanBoeuf; illustrations and design by Amanda Clegg; photography by Kristi Jan Hoover, Ed Massery
Summary: a collection of short stories from the Children's Museum during the period of July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 (Non-Fiction)

Special Thanks:
Alison Bank, Madeline Dix, Mike Duckworth, Gina Evans, Anne Fullenkamp, Mark Hartman, Carol Johnson, Christine Koebly, Katie Koffler, Chip Lindsey, Mary Monaghan, Zena Ruiz, Jane Werner

About the type:
The Sabon® font was created by the well-known typographer Jan Tschichold over a three year period. It was released in 1967 as part of a joint venture by the Monotype, Linotype and Stempel foundries. It was inspired by an earlier Claude Garamond typeface Tschichold had seen on a 1592 specimen sheet printed by the Egenolff-Berner foundry.

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Thirty-five years ago, a group of philanthropists, volunteers, and community leaders had an idea. The idea seemed crazy, even to them, but they nurtured it anyway. The Junior League of Pittsburgh put pen to paper and started to write the story of Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, envisioned as a place where children could learn through hands-on play. The Museum has grown in the past three decades and become more than they could have ever imagined.

If the founders set out to write the Museum’s entire story in 1983, no one would have believed that today’s Children’s Museum could exist. The stories and fantasies imagined for the Museum’s future always felt big, but were repeatedly surpassed by reality. As time went on, the Museum, community partners, visitors, and staff added story lines that created an intricate, interwoven narrative about how a lofty dream can become a remarkable community cornerstone.

As the layers began to build, many of the stories critical to the Museum’s presence in Pittsburgh have become hidden. Most people see the Museum’s building, exhibits, and programs and how those things connect the neighborhood, but so many stories end up untold. Through this report, Tales of 2018, our Annual Report this year, we will show you exactly how much your investment has paid off by telling some of the stories that you may not have heard.

People connect with stories for their own reasons. The best stories are those in which we can envelope ourselves in the narrative—we can imagine ourselves as one of the characters. You, dear reader, are in fact one of the characters of this story. Your investments of time, talent, and treasure have created magical opportunities for children and families in our region.

I hope you enjoy this non-traditional telling of our story, your story, the stories not often told.

Fondly,
Mike Duckworth
I have always thought of the Children’s Museum as a refuge for families and children, a place to reconnect with each other—a place to fall in love with your family again. Over the past year or so, we at the Museum have doubled down on this idea, out of a need to see more kindness in our world.

In 2017, the Museum installed a small sign in our front yard that you’ve probably seen around Pittsburgh. It read: “No matter where you’re from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor,” in English, Spanish, and Arabic. Shortly after it was put out, the sign was defaced with racist stickers and graffiti.

Rather than simply take the sign down, the Museum staff came together to find a way to respond. Playing off the concept of a neighbor, we decided to translate the phrase “hi, neighbor” into 27 languages and create a window sign that welcomes all of our visitors as they enter the Museum. Skeptical of the accuracy of an online translation service, the staff recruited community experts to make sure our translations were appropriate and made sense in each language. In some languages, there was no single word equivalent of “neighbor,” but we still needed to find a way to make the speakers of those languages feel welcome.

Unfortunately, that vandalized sign was only the beginning of the hatred we would encounter this year. In October 2018, the lives of 11 vibrant people were lost in an act of violence at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill. The images and sentiments seen in the media surrounding events like these can be frightening and overwhelming for children. In response, the Museum sought to recommit itself to being a safe haven for families. In the week following the attack at the Tree of Life, the Museum was free and open to the public, welcoming 4,834 children and families through our doors.

We also decided to launch a program—free to the community—that offers a mobile version of XOXO: An Exhibit about Love & Forgiveness, an exhibit that we created and toured around the country over the past four years.

The exhibit facilitates conversations about the meaning of love, ways to release sadness and anger, and how to communicate your feelings to your loved ones. The pop-up version of XOXO has toured downtown Pittsburgh and places like Repair the World, the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

Next fall, we will also launch a new exhibit all about kindness, infused with the teachings of Pittsburgh’s beloved Mister Rogers. Our work around kindness is only just beginning.

Your kindness in 2018 has made so much possible. Keep reading to learn about the exciting things the Museum accomplished this past year and get a sneak peek into how it will transform in April 2019.
Imagine picking up a pay phone to begin a conversation with your best friend, but the voice coming out of the other end is the shrill, friendly voice of Piggie. Your friend hears everything you say in the voice of Piggie’s best friend, Gerald the Elephant. More than 100,000 children experienced this magical activity, along with several other interactive experiences in *The Pigeon Comes to Pittsburgh: A Mo Willems Exhibit*.

Gerald, Piggie, the Pigeon, the Duckling, and the Naked Mole all made their first appearances in easy reader books written by Mo Willems, an illustrator and former Sesame Street writer deemed the next Dr. Seuss by the New York Times.

The Children’s Museum, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Massachusetts, and Mo Willems himself designed the exhibit, which premiered in February 2018, and had the most well attended opening weekend of any Children’s Museum exhibit ever.

The Children’s Museum was attracted to Mo’s work because of the way he treats children—he recognizes their sophistication and that they deserve funny, beautifully illustrated stories.

And he is silly.

Kids used a catapult to fling Styrofoam hot dogs to either the Pigeon or the Duckling, more characters from Mo Willems’ witty books. They put on a fantastic fashion shows by dressing up the Naked Mole Rat, and turning a hand crank to operate the conveyor belt cat walk. They spun the wheel at the Thank-o-Rama and wrote a note of gratitude to someone in their life.

This exhibit has since left the Museum and is on tour across the country, with stops at the Kansas City Discovery Museum, the Children’s Museum of Atlanta, and the Minnesota Children’s Museum. Over the next five years it will entertain hundreds of thousands of kids and their families, while putting on display the exceptional team of artists, designers, architects, and engineers that produce some of the Museum’s most successful exhibits.
Animated films often get a bad reputation as being simple and childish. Over two weeks in the summer of 2018, Pixar Animation Studios came to Pittsburgh and helped middle school kids from Manchester Academic Charter School make movies. MACS is a public charter school based the Museum’s neighborhood, the North Side, and educates some of our cities’ most vulnerable youth, with more than 90% of the students qualifying for the free or reduced lunch program.

Through a program called Pixar in a Box, Pixar and the Museum gave these kids and their mentors a behind-the-desk look at how animation can be done with sophistication and a maturity of voice that lets people of all ages express their hopes, concerns, and thoughts through film.

First, the mentors, made up of teachers and Children’s Museum Teaching Artists, completed the Pixar in a Box curriculum, and explored storytelling, film grammar, lighting, and even hair simulation.

After their go at it, the mentors flipped the script and led the middle school students through the same curriculum. Despite the age differences between middle schoolers and their teachers, their experiences during the same workshops were strikingly similar. Everyone showed the same level of trepidation with something new. They were unsure about their abilities and talents. But this vulnerability and authenticity created unmatched learning opportunities for participants of all ages.

In a few areas, the kids consistently outshined their adult counterparts. The students of MACS used their animation projects to address real life subjects. They kept an open mind in exploring new techniques and technologies. They were open and honest with their peers about their fears and their motivations, and reciprocated by being considerate and constructive when giving feedback on the work of others. Through their films, these kids displayed an awareness of the world that, as a society, we often do not assign to pre-teens.

At the end of the two weeks, the participants of the Pixar in a Box program had a movie screening and spared no detail. They had popcorn, concessions, and set up a movie theater in the workshop space. The pride beaming from the mentors, their students, and the families and friends of everyone involved was electric. When given the agency to express themselves openly, this program proved that middle school aged kids can produce truly enchanting things.
The Children’s Museum’s exhibits and programming are all based on its Play with Real Stuff philosophy, which asserts that children deserve to play with things that are real, concrete, and relevant to their lives. The Museum uses this same philosophy when consulting with outside organizations.

Over the past few years, the Museum’s exhibit team has helped guide several local organizations through the creation or renovation of play spaces, including the Kidsport Lounge at the Pittsburgh International Airport and several Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh locations.

As one of Pittsburgh’s most treasured institutions, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves as a source of knowledge and a venue for curious exploration for people of all ages.

In late 2016, the Library was looking to renovate some of their locations in order to create social destinations—“third places” outside of school and home where kids could play, read, and relax with their friends and family.

This materialized in the form of custom furniture and exhibit installations, open spaces with designated stations for learner’s age and interest, and open-ended activities that allow the learner to drive the experience. The Museum helped the Libraries design exceptionally flexible spaces that ranged from 100 square feet to 1,000 square feet, and for children aged birth through 13 years old. The Museum’s staff also worked with Library staff to reframe how adults talk about play.

Today, when you walk into seven different Carnegie Library locations, you’ll find families cozied up in wooden chairs that resemble cocoons, groups of pre-teens working on projects, and young children using new equipment to design their own play time. Through the work of several devoted librarians and the Museum’s exhibit and design staff, these locations are truly a celebration of learning and play.
“Sometimes we forget how special the Children’s Museum is because we see it every day.” Carol Johnson, the School Programs and Outreach Manager for the Museum, walks through the doors of the Children’s Museum each morning, underneath a miniature roller coaster, past a towering Blue Heron sculpture, through the Museum’s light-filled Art Studio, up the stairs to her office. This plays a contrast against the places she visits to deliver Museum programs in the community.

The Children’s Museum’s mission is to provide museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity, and to ensure that all children have access to these experiences, regardless of disability or socio-economic status. Carol and her team, Lydia, Jaime, and Laura, find ways to deliver the Museum to kids outside the Museum and work with school systems to bring kids through our doors.

In recent years, the Museum has made deeper connections with more of our rural neighbors, providing them with workshops involving screen-printing, making, electricity, and more. Carol and her team travel to schools, libraries, and community centers throughout Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where throngs of ecstatic children welcome them each and every time. In one instance, Carol couldn’t even park on the same street as an outreach site because so many families and children had lined up to attend, and the local news stations were waiting with photographers!

In one spectacular visit, a school greeted Carol and her team with a banner held by two cardboard robots that the students had made. The same students had also collected recyclables for weeks before Carol’s visit to help replenish supplies in the Museum’s MAKESHOP.

Most of the classrooms that Carol visits also make a field trip to the Museum. In a recent group of 75 students, only two kids had ever been to Pittsburgh before and none had been to the Museum. These are the days where multiple children will tell Carol that they’re having the best day of their lives.
On June 8, 2018, the Children’s Museum’s Great Night Gala raised $366,092 for our mission, making it our most successful Gala to date. More than 400 people were in attendance to celebrate the Children’s Museum and the Great Friend of Children Awardee, Chip Burke and the Burke Family. Chaired by Bonnie and Tom VanKirk, and supported by lead sponsor Highmark, this year’s gala highlighted Pittsburgh’s industrial roots while patrons danced the night away in turn-of-the-century travel fashion. Many thanks to our supporters and congratulations to Chip Burke and the Burke Family!
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh boasts a great mix of contributed and earned revenue. Unique to most nonprofits—we earn money by designing our own exhibits and renting them to other museums across the country, and by designing children's spaces here at home too.

We have had skyrocketing attendance, with consistent growth over the past six years—307,000 visited our facility in FY18, representing all 50 states.

To keep all of this business percolating, our Board of Directors actively manages building and operating reserves, working capital and more.

They work closely with our stellar Director of Finance, who was named as CFO of the Year in 2018 by the Pittsburgh Business Times.
Tales of 2018

July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering support of the Museum from

American Eagle Outfitters Foundation
Alliance For Infants and Toddlers Inc
CGI Technologies and Solutions Inc.
Enterprise Vision Technologies, Inc
Apple Matching Gifts Program

Our sincerest thanks goes to the following individuals, foundations, companies, and government agencies that contributed to the Museum from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering partnership and steadfast support.

Corporation, Foundation and Public Support

Donor Listing
Every effort has been made to acknowledge the generosity of our donors. Should you discover an error or omission, please contact our development department at 412.322.5018 ext.327 or mdo@pittsburghkids.org.

Gems in Kind

Gems in Memory of

Gifts in Honor of

Lab Gifts as of March 13th, 2019
NEXT
IN THE
SERIES
With 2018 in the rearview mirror, the year ahead brings a major inflection point: the opening of a new museum for older kids. It’s called Museum Lab, a place where kids 10+ can have cutting-edge experiences in art, tech and learning.

Opening in late April 2019, Museum Lab is a place for tweens to explore real materials, tools, and processes in three new hands-on exhibits. In Studio Lab, kids will discover interactive artwork and create new installations working hand-in-hand with artists-in-residence. Make Lab will take our award-winning MAKESHOP and scale it up with more complex experiences in woodworking, design and metal working. In Tech Lab, visitors will work with Carnegie-Mellon University’s Entertainment Technology Center to explore virtual worlds, coding, storytelling, entertainment and more.

Located in the historic Carnegie Free Library of Allegheny, we have been working on Museum Lab and the revitalization of the building in earnest for nearly two years. Our renovation celebrates the building’s original features such as soaring arches, a decorative terra cotta entryway and mosaic tile floors, while introducing modern features, including a new grand staircase and energy efficient windows. We aim to achieve Gold LEED Certification and meet the goals of the 2030 District when we open in 2019.

New commissioned artworks from local and national artists will complement Museum Lab’s unique mix of grit and grandeur. Created by design group FreelandButck, OverView is a new installation that will adorn the ceiling of Museum Lab’s Grable Gallery. Made of intricately layered laser cut fabric, OverView will evoke the pattern of the Library’s original stained glass skylight.

Early in the design process, we realized that it would be too costly to remove the steel Carnegie Library stacks were the books were once stored. Our design team dreamed up the perfect solution—create an interactive art
installation! Artist Manca Ahlin was commissioned to transform the former
bookshelves (affectionately known as The Stacks) into a three-story artwork,
called Gymlacium that you can climb, slide down, swing on and chill in.
Manca weaves rope sections using traditional bobbin lace techniques that she
learned as a child in Slovenia.

At Museum Lab and Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, we share space
with on-site partners who work with or on behalf of children and youth to
enhance and diversify the programs and benefits that we offer kids. Our
cornerstone partner in Museum Lab is Manchester Academic Charter School
which will relocate its middle school to Museum Lab’s second floor starting
in the 2019/2020 school year.

And with the creation of Museum Lab, we’ll have created the largest
cultural campus for children in the country. Right here in Pittsburgh.

We are beyond grateful to the many partners, donors, staff and board
members who have made Museum Lab possible.