

Community Engagement Report.

Be curious. | GRAND
RAPIDS
PUBLIC
MUSEUM



2017

Vision

To inspire passionate curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around us.

Mission

We exist to be a living monument of artifacts, ideas and stories told through exhibitions, events and educational programming designed to inspire, motivate and celebrate our human bond. We enrich the life of our community through experiences of the wider world in a uniquely Grand Rapids context.



2017 Marks an Extraordinary Year for the Grand Rapids Public Museum!

Thanks to the voters of Kent County, the Grand Rapids Public Museum and the John Ball Zoo were ensured a stable source of funding beginning in 2017 from a 10-year millage that was passed in November 2016. It is evident that our community believes in our mission, vision and purpose.

Funds raised from the 2016 millage are going toward essential maintenance and facility repairs, providing quality care for the 1,600 animals currently at the Zoo and 250,000 unique artifacts at the Museum, as well as updating and expanding cutting-edge educational programming and exhibits so all Kent County residents can enjoy them for years to come.

As a benefit of the millage, even more people are able to visit the Museum for our many impactful programs and exhibitions. Kent County resident children age 17 and under now have free general admission into the Museum, while adults and seniors enjoy reduced general admission. This could not have been done without support from our community.

Throughout last year, we challenged minds with brain teasers in *Mindbender Mansion*, discovered glowing organisms with *Creatures of Light*, and explored the world of myth and legend in *Dragons, Unicorns & Mermaids*. The Museum turned children into neuroscientists in Curiosity Labs, brought music to life in the Chaffee Planetarium, and explored complex scientific discovery in physics through a new GRPM-produced planetarium show, *Subatomic*. Thanks to you we can continue these programs.

We are excited for what the future holds for the Grand Rapids Public Museum and we thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

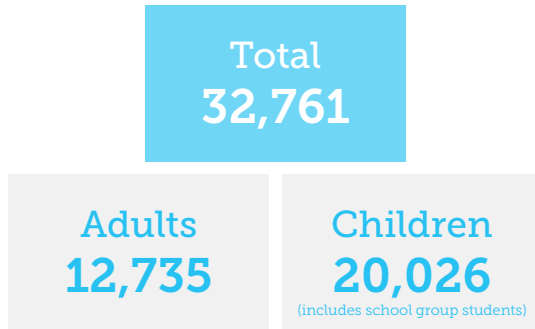


Dale A. Robertson
President & CEO

2017: The Year in Numbers

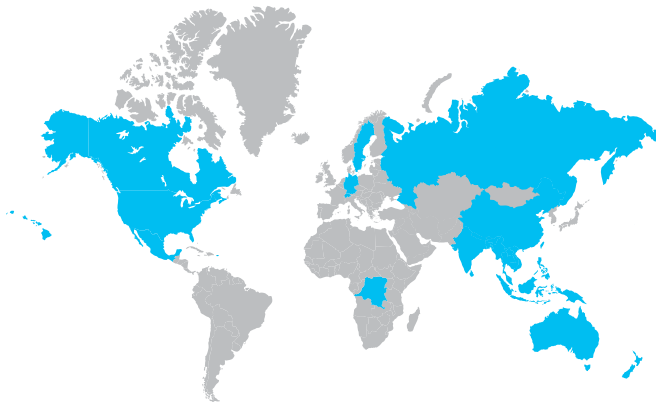
As a direct result of the millage, beginning in 2017, children 17 and under have free general admission into the Grand Rapids Public Museum, while adults and seniors enjoy reduced general admission.

Kent County Visitors



Kent County residents served between February 1 through June 30, 2017.

Visitors' Countries



In 2017, the Museum welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 11 other countries around the globe.

Other countries include: Australia, Canada, China, Congo, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Southeast Asia, Sweden, Switzerland

2017 Attendance

Overall visitors:
295,635

Traveling exhibit attendance:
113,000+

Spring break 2017 attendance:
21,109

Planetarium attendance:
65,366

School group attendance:
33,959

Museum members:
6,736

Fiscal year, July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

A man and a young boy are looking at an interactive exhibit in a museum. The man is pointing at a small green object on a red base. The boy is looking at the exhibit with interest. In the background, other visitors are visible, including a man in a red shirt and a woman. The museum has a brick archway and large windows.

Facilities Updates

Thanks to the voter-approved 2016 millage, we were able to complete major upgrades and enhancements for the comfort and safety of Museum visitors:

- **Repairs to Van Andel Museum Center**
- **Parking ramp and elevator improvements**
- **Upgraded air conditioning in the Chaffee Planetarium**
- **Flood protection work on the north and south lawns**

Purchases made from vendors within Kent County, totaling nearly \$2 million and ranging from lightbulbs to café food to moving and storage, keep the Museum running smoothly. The Museum strives to do at least 5% of business with minority and women-owned businesses.

We look forward to continued improvements in 2018.



West Michigan Habitats exhibition

Community Engagement & Partners

The Grand Rapids Public Museum partners with local educational institutions, organizations and governmental agencies to provide the community with enrichment opportunities and educational events.

Forest Hills Central High School Biology and John Ball Zoo

In 2016 and 2017 the Grand Rapids Public Museum partnered with the Biology Department at Forest Hills Central High School and the John Ball Zoo to host a day of hands-on learning. By comparing specimens up close with the live animals at the Zoo, students were able to engage more deeply and make connections that are impossible in a classroom.

River City Water Festival

In partnership with Grand Valley State University's Groundswell Program, the West Michigan Environmental Action Council and other local environmental and watershed-focused organizations, the Museum hosted the River City Water Festival with great success. 400 students and nearly 1,000 guests learned about the Grand River watershed, nonpoint source pollution, native and invasive species and ways individuals can make a positive impact on their local environment. These partners were also awarded a new grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to continue hosting the River City Water Festival at the Museum and to expand its reach to more schools, students and educators in 2018.

The Life of the Mind Designed by Calvin College Students

This exhibition, *The Life of the Mind*, was based on a student project from Calvin College, where Historical Research and Writing students presented the concepts of an exhibit exploring the history of mental health care to the GRPM, to accompany the traveling exhibit *Brain: The World Inside Your Head*. *The Life of the Mind* included artifacts from the GRPM's Collections, which provided fascinating evidence about the progression of medical intervention for mental illness from radical treatments of the 19th and 20th centuries, to the more research-based therapies of present-day practice. The exhibit was on display from October 2017 to January 2018.

Grand Rapids Public Schools Upward Bound

First generation college-bound students from Grand Rapids Public Schools visited the Museum throughout the summer through GVSU's Upward Bound program. Student groups used design thinking processes to experience, observe and suggest ways to enhance exhibits and Museum spaces for teenage audiences. Students presented their findings to Museum staff who will use the information to inform future master-planning efforts.



Iron pour at Grand Rapids Maker Faire 2017

GRPM Gives Back

The Museum donates tickets annually to various Kent County non-profits and schools for fundraisers.

\$6,460 in ticket donations

As a service to the community, the Museum also loans artifacts from its Collections to museums, schools and other organizations.

**147 artifacts on loan to
11 organizations**



Fashion Collection at the GRPM Archives



Mindbender Mansion traveling exhibition

School Impact

As a committed, vital educational resource, the Museum offers learners the opportunity to explore through hands-on activities, access to the 250,000 artifact Collection in the Museum archives and guided explorations.



Visited the Museum
from Kent County



With direct access to the Museum's archives



“

“My favorite part [about the Immerse program] was all the different ways my students were able to find and use the information available at the Museum. It was a new way of learning for them.”

– April,
Murray Lake Elementary,
Third Grade Teacher, Lowell



Mindbender Mansion traveling exhibition

Grand Rapids Public Museum School and XQ Super School

The Museum School is the product of an ongoing educational collaboration with Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, the City of Grand Rapids and Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.

In 2016, the Museum School was awarded one of the XQ Super School prizes of \$10 million to fund efforts in re-imagining high school and has become a model of public education for the nation.



Grand Rapids Public Museum School students



Immerse Family Night

Education Programs

Educator-led programming offered by the GRPM highlights inquiry based learning with a focus on culture, history and science.

The Museum's scientific inquiry programs focus on interacting with models, handling artifacts and designing solutions for real-world problems, and cultural and history based programs focus on engagement through storytelling, empathy and perspective taking. All programs are aligned with widely accepted academic standards.

The Immerse Program

Immerse provides a week-long learning experience at the Museum for students in schools from the West Michigan region. The experience is crafted and led by the visiting teachers, leveraging the interpretive exhibition spaces, Museum artifacts, and various Museum-created programs. Immerse is intended to help students develop and excel as problem solvers, innovators, storytellers, and empathetic contributors to society. This year the GRPM provided 52 scholarships to Kent County classrooms so they could participate.

New & Enhanced Programs & Exhibits

Through the generosity of donors and the support received from the community including the millage, the GRPM was able to explore other worlds, spark curiosity and bring exhibits to life with the 2017 programming. Here are some highlights:

Traveling Exhibitions

The Museum had the pleasure of hosting the intriguing traveling exhibitions *Whales: Giants of the Deep*, *Mindbender Mansion*, *Creatures of Light*, *Brain: The World Inside Your Head*, and *Dragons, Unicorns & Mermaids!*.

Meet Finny

Finny, the iconic finback whale skeleton, came to life through a virtual reality experience where visitors were transported to a whale's natural environment and learned about whale anatomy and the history of this artifact through digital touchscreens.

Subatomic - New Planetarium Show

Subatomic takes viewers on a journey of scientific discovery of the Higgs boson, an elusive subatomic particle crucial to physics and existence itself. The experience includes a live interactive portion and hands-on components.

Other Exhibits and Programs Included:

- Science Tuesdays & Curiosity Labs
- Concerts Under the Stars
- Beer Explorers
- *The Life of the Mind* - exhibit



Brain: The World Inside Your Head traveling exhibition

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*“They always have fantastic exhibits.
One of the best museums in the
Michigan area, hands down!”*

– Joseph,
Museum visitor



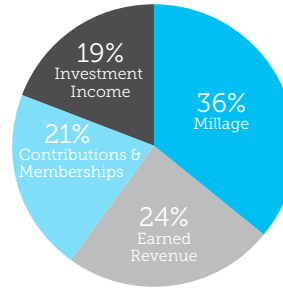
Chaffee Planetarium

2017 Museum Budget

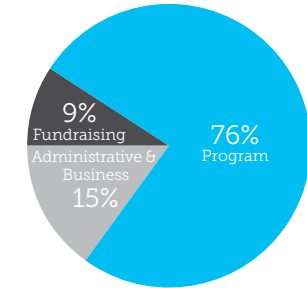
The Museum is thankful to the voters of Kent County for the millage that covers core operational costs including caring for 250,000+ community artifacts, allowing for facility improvements and deferred maintenance and enhancing educational programs and exhibits.

Millage funding was received part way through the GRPM's 2017 fiscal year.

Revenue



Expenses



Total net assets of \$40.7 million

Thank you to the following individuals and corporations who have made contributions to the Museum in 2017.

\$100,000+

Peter C. & Emajean Cook Foundation

\$50,000+

DTE Energy Foundation
Great Lakes Fishery Trust
Institute of Museum & Library Services
John & Nancy Kennedy
Sebastian Foundation
The Steve & Amy Van Andel Foundation

\$25,000+

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How to Donate

Online at grpm.org/donate or
by calling 616.929.1705

Accreditation

The GRPM was the first public museum to be accredited
by the American Alliance of Museums. www.aam-us.org

Contact Info & Hours

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
616.929.1700 | info@grpm.org



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