

Community Engagement Report.

Be curious. | GRAND
RAPIDS
PUBLIC
MUSEUM



2019

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 through a uniquely Grand Rapids lens.



2019 – A Year of Community

The Grand Rapids Public Museum belongs to you – people of every age, culture and ability. Thanks to you, in 2019 our institution was able to serve the community more broadly and inclusively than ever before.

Through heartfelt support and involvement of so many individuals and organizations, we were once again able to provide a rich mix of exhibits, programs and experiences designed to inspire and educate. Developed with the help of community experts, our highly accessible, hands-on, interactive *TOYS!* exhibit is just one example of how the GRPM designs experiences with the broadest population in mind.

It's our hope that every visitor feels at home here, recognizing something of themselves in what they experience. After all, curiosity about the culture we share is what binds us together as a community. Curiosity is the reason we open the Museum doors every day. For more than 165 years it has thrived here, stimulating and inspiring generation after generation.

The Museum was founded by the community and for the community, and we impact thousands of visitors and students year after year. The programs we offer and the exhibits we host depend on your generosity, including the 10-year millage approved by Kent County voters for the Museum and John Ball Zoo, now in its third year. You provide for essential maintenance and facility repairs, quality care for the more than 250,000 artifacts in the Collections and enhancing the programs and exhibits we offer.

Thank you for continuing to allow us to make a difference in the community through hands-on programs and exhibitions found only at the GRPM.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale A. Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dale A. Robertson
President & CEO

2019: The Year in Numbers

The Museum was once again a highly popular destination for our Kent County neighbors, visitors from the Midwest and around the globe. Thanks to the 2016 millage vote, Kent County children ages 17 and younger continue to receive free general admission every day and Kent County adults and seniors receive reduced admission fees. Overall, school group visits, planetarium attendance and Museum membership grew in 2019.

Visitors' Countries

In 2019 the Museum welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 15 other countries around the globe.



Other countries include: Brazil, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

2019 Attendance

Overall visitors

257,538

Planetarium
attendance

76,278

School group
attendance

35,896

Guided education
program attendance

18,642

Kent County school
group attendance

23,454

Number of Kent
County school groups

459

Museum members

7,143

Fiscal year, July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019



West Michigan Habitats exhibition

Facilities Stewardship

Thanks to generous community support, donations and grants, the GRPM was able to make investments to provide better experiences for visitors and to improve the efficiency and sustainability of our operations. This enables the Museum to continue to care for all sites under the GRPM stewardship.

2019 Updates

- **Facility upgrades including: front desk and gift shop improvements, lighting and new seating throughout the Museum**
- **Parking ramp repairs, ADA-accessible front doors as well as a roof anchor for worker safety**
- **Upgraded cafe and catering kitchen appliances and tables for use during programs & events**
- **Creation of a new multi-use education and exhibit space**
- **Acquisition of new vehicles for maintenance use and Collections transport**
- **Stabilization of Mound N at the Norton Mounds, one of the GRPM sites**
- **Rebuilt porches, refinished doors, repainted exterior and restored missing rooftop finials at the Voigt House, one of the GRPM sites**

Purchases made from vendors within Kent County, totaling over \$2 million for goods and services ranging from insurance and administrative needs to securing the skills of local designers, carpenters, artists and other craftspersons, keep all our facilities running smoothly. The Museum is committed to doing at least 5% of business annually with minority and women-owned businesses.

We look forward to continued improvements in 2020.



Native American Culture Days program

Community & Partners

The Museum enjoys close partnerships with local educational institutions, organizations and government agencies. Together, we offer the community significant cultural opportunities and educational events.

Changing America Partnerships

Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863 and the March on Washington, 1963, a traveling exhibition at the GRPM in 2019, examined the relationship between two great people's movements, which both grew out of decades of bold actions, resistance, organization and vision.

The GRPM added to the exhibition, using artifacts and stories from local perspectives. In addition to those from the GRPM Collections, many artifacts on display were on loan from the Grand Rapids African American Museum and Archives. Local stories were told through the voices of our community in the form of oral histories. The exhibition included a place for visitors to share their stories, which are now saved in the GRPM's digital archive at GRPMCollections.org.

Westside Collaborative Partnership

Changing America brought new partnerships to GRPM including local leaders, institutions, universities and more. One of these partners, Westside Collaborative, participated at August's Maker Faire, by interviewing Grand Rapidsians in their mobile studio. The interviews were featured in the exhibit alongside Mosaic Film Experience summer camp videos (see page 9). The GRPM hosted a booth at the Westside Street Fair.

Partners & Collaborators:

David & Carol Van Andel Family Foundation, Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Steelcase Inc., The Steve & Amy Van Andel Foundation, Magic 104.9, Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives, Grand Rapids Urban League, Grand Rapids Community College, Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, Inclusive Performance Strategies, Westside Collaborative, Mosaic Film Experience, City of Grand Rapids Community Relations Commission.

Giving Back

The Museum donates tickets annually to various Kent County nonprofits and schools for their fundraisers.



\$7,500+

in ticket donations

As a service to the community, artifacts from the Collections are loaned to museums, schools and other organizations.



40

objects on loan to 11 organizations



618

artifacts used for 50 Museum School projects



37

Artifact Discovery Kit loans to K-12 classrooms

Received from our Community



1,513

objects received from 37 community partners for *TOYS!* exhibit



Lakeshore Middle School students, recipients of transportation funding thanks to Crystal Flash

“

“We deliver fuels to many schools and know firsthand how the cost of transportation can be a challenge for rural students. We hoped we could lessen this gap and provide an impact on our rural communities.”

– Marc Foerster,
Vice President of Residential Business, Crystal Flash

Crystal Flash Partnership

Thanks go to fuel supplier Crystal Flash, who made it possible for students from rural schools to visit the Museum for educational programs by underwriting their busing costs. In 2019, 6,570 students from 85 school groups took a field trip to the Museum to learn about history, science and culture — 28 of these groups for the very first time. The generosity of Crystal Flash removed transportation barriers that many schools face.

The Mounds Stabilization

The Norton Mounds are a group of 11 burial mounds located near the Grand River, southwest of the City of Grand Rapids. Over the years there has been much discussion on stewardship of The Mounds. The GRPM, Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians, Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation & Repatriation Alliance, United Tribes of Michigan, the City of Grand Rapids Community Relations Commission and other interested parties have been working together to inform stewardship of the mounds. Stabilization of one mound was completed in 2019 to ensure the integrity of the structure.

The Museum refers to this location as The Mounds out of respect for the indigenous cultures.

Roger That! Science of Space Programming

In collaboration with Grand Valley State University, the 2019 Roger That! program was the third annual celebration of local hero Roger B. Chaffee, an astronaut with the NASA Apollo 1 crew who died during a command module test. The GRPM also hosted programming for K-12 field trips in partnership with the Kent County Road Commission, GVSU Engineering, City of Wyoming Waste Water Treatment, Society for Women Engineers and AECOM Engineering. A talk by astronaut and artist Nicole Stott was attended by 1,200 people. Additionally, GVSU hosted guest speakers, panel discussions and a challenge for student projects related to humans, communities or robots in space.



Roger That! program

Native American Culture Days

This annual event for school groups showcases the Anishinabe from the Great Lakes region. The GRPM worked with many new partners from the Native American community to present, showcase artwork, lead drumming and dancing and host this two-day celebration of culture. Community members from Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Gun Lake Tribe, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Ziibiwing Center became first-time presenters at the event. Long-time coordinating partners, including members of the Grand Valley Lodge and the Native American Education Program at Grand Rapids Public Schools and new partnerships made the 2019 Native American Culture Days the most successful it has been in the 10+ years of the program, with 1,326 students attending – up from 803 in 2018.

Native American Advisory Team

The GRPM partnered with a Native American Advisory Team in updating specific educational programming to ensure accuracy and updated content, working with members of the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians, Gun Lake Band, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

Two guided educational programs in particular have been reworked to make them more representative and authentic - *Investigate: Native American Cultural Artifacts* and *Discover: The First People of This Place*.

The Riverfront

Restoration of the Grand River will include the namesake rapids and the activation of key locations for public engagement with the river. Perfectly situated to be a hub of river education and outreach, the Museum was designated as one of the first of seven sites to be developed. The Museum is engaged with city officials and the community to refine plans to transform the grounds into a riverside public space.



Native American Culture Days program

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“Having live cultural presenters was AMAZING! ... It was, by far, the best museum experience I have ever had and we have been members for years.”

– Melissa Utter,
5th grade teacher, Appleview Elementary

“We’ve done this program the past couple years and this was the best it’s ever been. It was fantastic!”

– 3rd grade parent,
Forest Grove Elementary



Riverfront potential concept



Science and Leadership summer program

Camp Curious Summer Camps

Each summer, the GRPM hosts more than 900 participants for Camp Curious, a series of day-long and multi-day summer camp experiences for pre-K students to high schoolers. Here are some highlights of the 2019 program showcasing community partnerships.

Science and Leadership Summer Program

In partnership with Grand Rapids White Water, the GRPM hosted a two-week camp to give high schoolers hands-on interaction with the River Restoration Project, teaching principles of sustainability and encouraging them to become future leaders willing to tackle complex projects with widespread benefits.

Mosaic Mobile Film Making

The GRPM partnered with local nonprofit, Mosaic Film Experience, as part of the *Changing America* exhibit. This one-week camp gave 14 West Michigan 7th-9th graders the chance to learn filmmaking by making a real documentary. Participants interviewed four civic leaders on film about how *Changing America* relates to them personally and its effect on community. The students' work was added to the exhibit and archived into the Museum's Collections available at GRPMCollections.org.

Life in Space: A Journey through the Extremes

This camp was developed in partnership with the Van Andel Education Institute (VAEI). Students in this week-long space camp spent two days at the Museum, visiting the planetarium, interacting with artifacts and participating in activities relating to space travel. The following three days were spent at VAEI using the laboratory facilities to conduct experiments. The camp culminated with a visit to the Veen Observatory in Lowell.

Space: The Final Frontier

In partnership with Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association (GRAAA), students from the VAEI camps joined participants in the Space: The Final Frontier camp at the Veen Observatory. All together, 50 parents and campers observed the night sky through the observatory's three main telescopes, as well as other telescopes brought by GRAAA members, who also discussed planetary makeup and the path of the International Space Station and named an as-yet-unnamed Jupiter moon.



Camp Curious

Summer Camp Scholarships

The Museum strives to be inclusive and offer affordable camp options. These include single-day camp experiences at a greatly reduced rate and member discounts. The GRPM offers scholarships covering 100% of costs to parents who participate in the Foundation's YES Program and the Kids & Family Expo, through a partnership with the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and GRKIDS.



Camp Curious



Artifact-based guided education program

School Impact

The Museum is a vital educational resource, that stimulates learners' curiosity through hands-on activities, access to 250,000+ artifacts and guided explorations.



166

Kent County schools visited,
with access to the Collections



1,302

students toured
the Collections



35,896

students participated
in a field trip



459

school groups
visited



18,642

students participated in guided
education programs

Guided Education Programs

The Museum offers five categories of inquiry and artifact-based programming with options for multiple grade levels:

Explore: Exhibit explorations that help students hone skills to become Museum learners for life.

Investigate: Hands-on primary-source investigations that help students reveal stories held in the Museum's artifact and specimen Collections.

STEAM: Teaching science, technology, engineering, art/design and math concepts, utilizing innovative Museum technology and resources such as neuroscience research equipment and electronic prototyping materials.

Discover: Diverse place-based programs emphasizing where local examples of history, culture and science can be found in the Museum and in the city.

Share: Storytelling, empathizing, perspective-taking and creative writing help students engage at a deep level with the experiences of diverse individuals in history.

Social studies teacher Monica Van Wienen from West Side Christian School in Grand Rapids had a vision for her 6th graders as they embarked on their Ancient Civilizations unit. Her students participated in the guided education program *Explore: West Michigan Habitats*. Besides learning to use exhibits as a tool for exploration, investigation and discovery in this program, they had the opportunity to interview exhibit designers and fabricators. Students returned to school and created their very own exhibits about Middle American Civilizations.

"The students loved it and learned so much — content connections and life skills. They came back with so many notes and ideas ... museum experts also shared the importance of meeting all audiences when an exhibit is put together. That caused my students to have some of their information translated into braille for our 3rd grader who is blind. Each year, I teach the civilization of Middle America; this was the first time that it truly came to life."



Babylonian clay tablet c. 2300 BCE

Grand Rapids Public Museum School Curation Class

Staff worked with Grand Rapids Public Schools to create a curriculum for the Museum School. Curation is a place- and project-based lab providing a platform for inquiry and interdisciplinary connections using Museum artifacts to study the wider world. Design Thinking methodology helps students make connections and tell the story of the artifacts.



Artifact-based guided education program



The Immerse Program

Crafted and led by visiting teachers, this week-long program for West Michigan students leverages exhibition spaces, artifacts and enrichment programs to create a unique learning experience that immerses students in local history, science and culture, connecting them deeply to the curriculum and their community. Immerse teachers are trained through a rigorous summer orientation program and an individualized planning session with Museum K-12 educators. They select from 20 guided education programs and 20 planetarium presentations and have access to 11 thematic artifact kits with lessons and background information. Immerse has expanded and grown dramatically since its 2012 launch with six classes and is now at capacity with over 50 classrooms participating.

“

“We love that the Immerse program gets students out of the classroom and allows them to explore, touch and learn facts about our history that brings it to life! Not only does the Immerse program cover many standards in ELA, Science and Social Studies, but it also gives students a chance to be curious and get excited about topics that might be new to them or that they weren’t excited about before going to the Museum. We rely on this program to teach so many content standards.”

– Teresa Timmer,
4th grade teacher, South Elementary, Grandville, MI



Immerse program

2018 / 2019 Immerse by the numbers:



52

Kent County classes, grades 1-8



1,247

students



21

schools

7 public school districts
4 private schools
2 charter schools



Immerse program



TOYS! exhibition

New & Enhanced Programs & Exhibits

Through the generous support of donors and the community, we were able to explore new worlds, spark curiosity and bring fresh exhibits to life with our 2019 programming.

Saturday Curiosity Labs

This popular program continues on Saturday during the school year. Open to the public and included with general admission, it brings STEM content to life for all ages through demonstrations, experiments and hands-on activities.

Traveling & Special Exhibits 2019:

Expedition: Dinosaur

TOYS!

Changing America

Design Zone

Bodies Revealed

Young Women in Science

Cohorts of students from four middle schools participated in the second year of this after-school program. They explored themes around building a sustainable future for Grand Rapids, with a strong emphasis on energy. Hands-on labs emphasized design and innovation through experiments with hydrogen-powered cars, solar panels, wind turbines, supercapacitors and tests for harnessing energy from salt-water, ethanol and the human body.

Supported by the DTE Energy Foundation.

“

“I am proud of myself because I got to do some things I didn’t even know existed. Now, all I want to do is be a scientist!”

– Jennifer,
6th grade student, Alger Middle School
Young Women in Science participant



“

*“Great programming and exhibits.
A local treasure.”*

– Anna Baeten

“Kids love exploring and learning here!”

– Caitlin Bolich

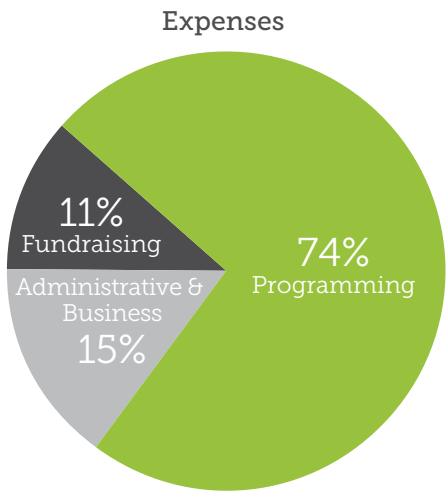
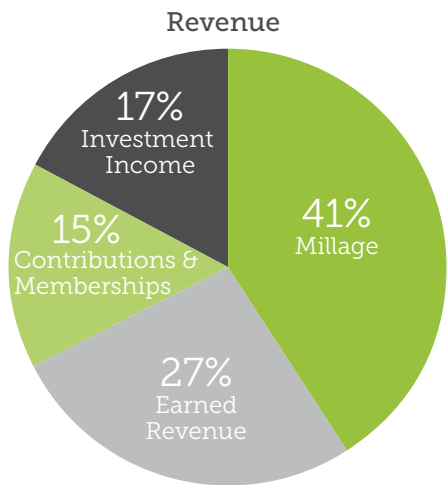


2019 Museum Budget

The Museum is grateful 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 previously deferred maintenance and enhancing educational programs and exhibits.

Total net assets, including endowed dollars: \$47.7 million

Budget Breakdown



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Thank you to these individuals and corporations who have made contributions to the Museum in 2019.

\$100,000+

City of Grand Rapids
Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs

\$50,000+

DTE Energy Foundation
Sebastian Foundation
David & Carol Van Andel Family Foundation
The Steve & Amy Van Andel Foundation

\$25,000+

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please let us know by emailing us at
info@grpm.org.

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Online at grpm.org/donate or
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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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