



# PLAY BOOK

..... 2022



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Mayo Clinic Health System



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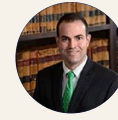
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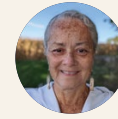
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CPA, MBT, Partner, Abdo



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Compeer Financial



**Shane VanEngen**  
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Professor, College of Arts and Humanities,  
Minnesota State University, Mankato



## A note from **Ann Hendricks** Outgoing Board Chair

As I leave my position on the board of the Children's Museum, I feel a sense excitement for the future. The evolution into new and exciting programs, expansion, and interactive exhibits grows constantly with the expertise of staff and leadership, keeping the whole child in their sights. New initiatives bring 21<sup>st</sup> century mindfulness to the ever-changing needs of our children.

I am constantly reminded of the giving and thoughtfulness of our communities. Some give money, some give ideas, some push the leadership to continue seeking ways to include everyone, and some come to enjoy the wonderful experience. Play, it's what we do with meaning, learning and fun.

# From the CEO

## Thank you Board of Directors and Executive Committee

I wish to extend a sincere thanks to an amazing Board of Directors that has looked boldly into the future to envision and embrace our expansion. This year brought many exciting developments that were led by our outgoing Chair Ann Hendricks. Ann is a visionary who is undaunted. She led us through the pandemic and into an era of change and growth. Thank you, Ann, for your bold leadership, support of the CMSM and me.

Christi Wilking has stepped into the Chair role already in this fourth

quarter of 2022. I look forward to extending the vision of our future alongside her! It is great fun to be able to serve a dynamic group of people. (Make sure to review the Board roster published in this Play Book.)

Onward!!

Lou



## CMSM Staff

**Chelsea Bandas**  
ADMISSIONS AND CAFÉ  
MANAGER

**Cathy Brown**  
PLAYWORKER

**Sarah Buesing**  
PLAYWORKER

**Kathleen Burns**  
PROGRAM FACILITATOR

**Rachel Compant-Gemlo**  
PROGRAM FACILITATOR

**Louise Dickmeyer**  
CEO

**Ron Evan**  
CUSTODIAN

**Tasha Johnson**  
PROGRAM FACILITATOR

**Kim Kleven**  
VP OF PLAY AND LEARNING

**Gus Lennartson**  
PLAYWORKER

**Nick Linell**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF  
MEMBERSHIPS AND TECH

**Wyatt Miller**  
GUEST EXPERIENCE MANAGER

**Tristan Mehlretter**  
CUSTODIAN

**Nick Pocock**  
CUSTODIAN

**Sam Seifert**  
PLAYWORKER

**Luke Splinter**  
DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITS

**Heather Ungerer**  
VP OF OPERATIONS

**Garron Williams**  
BUILDING AND GROUNDS  
MANAGER

**Noah Williams**  
CUSTODIAN

**Sadie Williams**  
PLAYWORKER

**Daniel Young**  
FRONT DESK

# 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

**2179**

Active memberships as of October 2022, up from 1785 at the start of 2022!

**77,354**

Visitors to the CMSM through October including members, guests, and group visitors.

**31**

Visitors have come from 31 states.

**238**

CMSM has welcomed visitors from 238 different cities in Minnesota alone!

## brand **REFRESH**

The CMSM adopted a slight refresh of our graphic identity which is emblematic of the bright future ahead! The new brand elements also sync up our updated website. "Play. It's What We Do" lives on as the CMSM tag line. Enjoy the bright and lively look of these new elements!



# more PLAY

Throughout the year, CMSM made great strides towards a campus expansion

As the Museum begins a major expansion, the time is right to reinforce the strategic foundations of the organization and consolidate its ideas around children's play and learning. Therefore, CMSM is engaged in a robust planning process to explore and understand the strategic, learning, and visitor experience implications of its expansion.

The CMSM retained museum planning experts, Jeanne Vergeront and Jim Roe to define a new Strategic Master Plan through an 18-month planning process conducted in three phases. Phase I: Museum Expansion Framework; Phase II: Visitor Experience Plan; Phase III: Implementation Plan.

A committee of nine community and Museum representatives recently wrapped up Phase One guided by Jim and Jeanne. By combining a

Strategic Framework with a Play and Learning Framework, this Expansion Master Plan fulfills important planning objectives.

Renderings of the new CMSM campus included expanded outdoor play to be utilized year-round, a new neurodiversity learning center, and additional staff workspaces.

Thank you to the planning committee members for your time, passion and ideas.

Laura Bowman

Elizabeth Harstad

Kim Kleven

Jean Peterson

Luke Splinter

Dr. Mark Taylor

Anna Thill

Heather Von Bank

Karen Wahlstrom

Renderings of the planned expansion



Expanding nature-based play year-round is a major priority at the Children's Museum

## 2022 Grants Received

Arizona State University

Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation

Compeer Financial

Consolidated Communications Community Fund

Glen A. Taylor Foundation

Minnesota Department of Education - Grants Services Division

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Olseth Family Foundation

Page Jones Richards Family Fund

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

U.S. Bank Foundation

University of Minnesota/MAELC

Walmart Foundation

Xcel Energy Foundation



**FUN FACT:**

Not all Fire Trucks are red! Good Thunder Fire Dept has white trucks and the Lake Crystal Fire Dept has orange trucks!

# FIRE SAFETY DAY

The Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota hosted a Free Family Play day highlighting Fire Safety Education last August. Several area fire departments had fire trucks and emergency vehicles on site for kids to explore, as well as the smoke simulator house and Sparky the Fire Safety Dog, Smokey the Bear, a drone from the Blue Earth County

Sheriff’s office, and fire safety education from the MN DNR.

The sponsors for the Fire Safety Education Day helped to make it possible for this to be a free day both for admission into CMSM and for all of the outdoor experiences. We had 801 people attend our event this year.



The Ignite Society continues to grow welcoming new members each month! Recently a new IS member wrote a note along with his contribution. Surprisingly, he hadn’t even moved to Mankato yet!

*“I’m inspired and excited by the work of the Children’s Museum. Although I have not yet been to the Museum, it is clear that the organization has a clear direction! My family and I are relocating to Mankato from the Chicago area next week and look forward to being a part of the work there. I’d love to touch base with someone about how I might become involved and volunteer some time to the Museum.”*



144 members

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## Mayo Clinic Health Systems

The CMSM’s partnership with Mayo Clinic Health System provides opportunities for children and families to gain greater awareness about health and wellness and develop beneficial skills. This is accomplished through special events held at the Museum that allow MCHS residents to engage with children and families through impactful play.

## Open Door Health Clinic

Earlier this year, the CMSM partnered with the Open Door Health Clinic to host a free family fun night. In addition to an evening of play, children and families were also greeted by dental professionals for free screenings, giveaways, and information on dental health.

## Feeding Our Community Partners

This past June, the CMSM partnered with Feeding Our Community Partners (FOCP) through their Summer Backpack Food Program. The CMSM provided 1000 One-Day Family Free Passes to include in each backpack, providing a free day of play to families that otherwise might not be able to visit the Museum. Between June and October, more than 50 of these passes had already been redeemed!



# all things AG

The Museum hosts several Agriculture & Nature Initiatives that show the rich exhibits and programs that support a deeper understanding on how agriculture is a part of life here in the South Central Minnesota region.



One of the pillars of CMSM is our Agriculture Education with focus on learning where our food comes from and opportunities to understand our regional agriculture industry and how this impacts all.

We also had several visiting animals, including:

- goats from O'Malley Farms and Ruby Ranch
- horses from Pinewood Stables
- pigs from Christensen Farms
- cows from Yost Farms
- Hasse Farms Petting Zoo visited during Autumn Adventures in October

"Hosting visiting animals brings an opportunity for children to interact and experience animals with all their senses! We provide an opportunity to bring in those farmers and animal caretakers

// Hosting visiting animals brings an opportunity for children to interact and experience animals with all their senses!



to inform our guests about how they care for them, feed them, and then answer questions about how they become a part of our circle

of life," said Kim Kleven, Vice President of Play and Learning.

Our gardens provide an opportunity to facilitate conversations about planting, growing, caring for, harvesting, and food accessibility. Children spend the summer helping to water the plants as they grow. During harvest season we encourage guests to pick the tomatoes, beans, and grapes and do taste testing. We have zucchini, squash, kale, and flowers for guests to take home to add to their mealtime prep. We are looking to expand these opportunities with the Living Earth Community Gardens bringing us more produce to share with families to utilize.

Other highlights include our Three Sisters Garden Experience. The Three Sisters Gardens use planting methods based on Native American gardening. The Three Sisters are corn, beans and squash.



## Additional Ag Events

- Dairy Day: Celebrating National Dairy Month by having our visiting cows, local Dairy Princesses, and local Dairy Associations that provided Gogurts.
- We Dig Pigs: Hosted our visiting pigs and their providers, Martin Co. Pork Producers and Marty the Pig and the Minnesota Pork Producers Association / Minnesota Pork Board.



- Food From Farms: We hosted Wooden Spoon, South Central MN Food Recovery, and Living Earth Gardens to link families to the services these organizations provide. From using local producers to a network created to use food that would be discarded and getting it into the food supply chain again. Opportunities were bountiful to learn about gardening and sustainable food options.

gateway to

# PLAY

opening the door for ALL children to experience the joy of learning through the Power of Play at the Children's Museum

## OBJECTIVES:

**1 CHILDREN** have an opportunity to gain abundant and diverse experiences designed to stimulate young brains, build strong bodies, and nurture strong parent/child bonds – key elements for the optimal development and positive wellbeing of children.

**2 PARENTS/CAREGIVERS** have an opportunity to gain abundant and diverse experiences to engage with their children in ways that help stimulate young brains, build strong bodies and promote strong parent/child bonds.

**3 FAMILIES** have an opportunity to experience a safe and welcoming place in the community to spend time as a family while at the same time play, learn, and support the health and well-being needs of all members.



3

SNAP EVENTS

Special Needs Accessibility Playtime (SNAP Nights) are special events for children with sensory challenges or other special needs and their families to experience the Museum when there are a limited number of visitors present – FREE of charge.



613

GATEWAY TO PLAY MEMBERSHIPS

2022 is on track to provide more Gateway to Play memberships than ever before.



144

FREE FAMILY PASSES

Free passes redeemed through Gateway to Play Community Partners as of October. Many of these families have then become Gateway to Play Members or return to play again.



2022 Impact



52

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community partners keep the Museum informed about the needs, challenges, and resources needed for the families they serve and provide valuable input that helps shape the Museum's access efforts. Partners also connect visitors to the Museum through Free Family Admission Passes and Gateway to Play Museum memberships.



23

FAMILY SUPPORT MEMBERSHIPS

CMSM provides a safe and neutral space for home visitors or family support professionals and families to meet for assessments or supervised visits.





### Art Explorers

Art Explorers is a program that offers all guests an opportunity to work with a variety of art mediums in an open studio environment. It is designed so that guests can play with and explore art on their own timeline using their own ideas and creativity. Providing an open art studio is so important for children of all ages because it encourages decision making in a risk-free environment, embraces individual expression, provides a tactile sensory experience, promotes self-esteem and oftentimes offers a meditative experience to ease stress and anxiety.

## programming

# RAMPUP

several CMSM programs got a makeover in 2022

### Young Explorers

Young Explorers is a weekly program for toddlers and preschoolers - although anyone at the museum is welcome to participate. This program focuses on play schemas, which are repeated themes in children's natural play, and nature and place based learning which explores the outside world far and near. Children need autonomy in their play so these sessions are open ended and offer a variety of materials to explore



### Baby Play

Baby Play has been an inspiration for us to highlight the Museum's Infant & Toddler Play Porch and all it has to offer children 0-36 months. Sensory bins, puppets, loose parts, peek-a-boo boxes, and musical instruments are just a few of the things we have offered. Baby Play is a great time for parents and caregivers of small ones to socialize and share experiences - milestones and hardships, they are all part of parenting! Baby play is led by program facilitators who have backgrounds and a passion for early childhood development!







Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota  
224 Lamm St  
Mankato, MN 56001

Return Service Requested

**PLAY.**  
IT'S WHAT WE DO.



2022  
PLAYBOOK