The undeniable, incredible, exceptional power of play
What a powerful year of play. Thanks to generous supporters like you, Minnesota Children’s Museum had another blockbuster year. The highlights are here in our annual report or better yet, our “playbook.”

It was a record-breaking year as 432,246 children and adults streamed through the Museum’s doors to fill their shopping carts in the Our World gallery, tinker with the gear wall in World Works or wander through traveling exhibits including Curious George™: Let’s Get Curious!, our homegrown exhibit that has touched more than three million people across the country since hitting the road in 2007.

Families experienced the brain-boosting benefits of play at our downtown St. Paul location and in libraries and community centers across Minnesota as we toured our Storyland exhibit and ramped up installation of Smart Play Spots, our aptly named early literacy environments. Over the past year, we’ve heard countless stories about the impact these free-of-charge experiences are having on the communities they touch. Several locations attracted visitors so hungry for quality playful-learning activities that they traveled an hour or more for a chance to pluck vegetables from Peter Rabbit’s garden.

Another amazing milestone was realized in Greater Minnesota with the opening of our satellite museum: Minnesota Children’s Museum of Rochester. Thanks to a swell of support and enthusiasm from the Rochester community — ranging from high-fives to financial contributions — MCMR is a tremendous success and shattering attendance and membership goals right and left.

While many new play partnerships blossomed across the state, we locally developed an early childhood research partnership with the University of Minnesota to help us infuse the best and latest research into our programs and exhibits.

Fiscal year 2012 (FY12) was bursting at the seams with many significant milestones and achievements. Thanks to your help, we are doing the right work for children and their development by providing pivotal play experiences that jumpstart learning and future success in the ant hill of life.
THE BREATHTAKING POSSIBILITIES OF PLAY

At Minnesota Children’s Museum, anything is possible. Imagination run wild, curiosities are taken on unexpected adventures and reality always comes with a twist. Behind all the mind-bending exhibits and experiences, real-life lessons are learned.

Among the greatest of those lessons are the creativity and critical thinking skills that will propel young minds to solve the challenges of the 21st century. The next generation of great thinkers, scientists, problem-solvers and creative geniuses is waiting in the wings. The skills children learn through hands-on playful experiences lay the groundwork for future learning and success in school and throughout their adult lives.

Two years ago, Minnesota Children’s Museum adopted a new strategic plan to spread the Museum’s wings beyond the iconic Seventh Street building. By extending the Museum’s footprint beyond the St. Paul location, more parents, educators and caring adults can connect the dots that play is key to unlocking the innovation, creativity and possibility that lives in all children. All of this great work reinforces an already strong, sustainable Museum core. The following pages are just a snapshot of the incredible stories, smiles and learning inspired by a growing, expanding, exciting push for play.

“The Museum provides an environment where kids can learn through play without even realizing they are learning.”

—Museum donor
Play is a mighty motivator, an earnest educator, a creative catalyst.

Play builds character, forms bonds and

“I feel like a better mother because I can take my children to the Museum and give them opportunities for fun and learning.”

—All Play member
makes learning something that happens naturally
when you laugh, when you wonder and when you are having a blast.

THE MAGICAL, TERRIFIC AND SCIENTIFIC NEED FOR PLAY
Championing the essential role of play in early learning

Experts are not kidding when they say play is fundamental for kids. The Museum’s work is centered on research that play contributes to a child’s cognitive, social-emotional and physical development. The Museum evolved its “Smart Play” brand to more clearly emphasize the learning benefits of play and connect them to the Museum’s unique role in early learning. In addition, a new messaging initiative was created to articulate how play enhances learning and makes it easy for adults to pocket the learning for easy reference beyond the Museum’s walls.

More play-centered thinking was kicked into gear as the Museum partnered with the University of Minnesota’s Institute of Child Development to synthesize the latest research on play.

This horizon-widening work led to the development of an academic group called the Research Advisory Council that will help guide Museum integration of recent early-childhood research into curiosity-cranking programs and exhibits.

Everyone needs a safe place to play and learn, so the Museum increased its commitment to the Play for All program (formerly known as Access) as 9,000 children received free year-long family memberships. In total, 123,000 visitors, including nearly 30,000 on Target Free 3rd Sundays, received free or subsidized Museum access through the entire Play for All program. The Museum also trained 1,448 early childhood educators to increase hands-on learning of math, science and literacy concepts.

“The Storyland exhibit was truly like Christmas in July for families in our community. Exposure to a high-quality exhibit was a real treat, and a free one at that!”
—Tara, West Learning Center, Worthington
While play was buzzing at libraries, schools and homes across the state, one million hours of play occurred inside the Museum’s building. FY12 was a 31-year high for attendance as visitors scampered through the Ant Hill and maneuvered the Crane at the St. Paul site. In addition, an all-time high of 1,200 volunteers contributed 32,500 hours of public programs and behind-the-scenes work. Seems play can rack up some serious numbers.

The Museum’s eight traveling exhibits, which had reached nearly 1.5 million adults and children across the country, served even more with the debut of three new traveling exhibits — Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites, Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice and Framed: Step Into Art.

The emphasis on imagination was in full force with new drop-in program activities that focus on imagination and creativity. The Imagination Corner program welcomed thousands of visitors who spent hours singing unabashedly at the top of their lungs, dancing wildly under the flying fish and artfully acting out a favorite fairy tale. Imagination Playground, an open-ended big-block play system that quickly found a home in visitors’ hearts last summer, claimed a permanent play space in the Our World gallery.
and fundamental to the development of our children – the same children who will go on to change the world.

THE OPEN-MINDED, WHOLE-HEARTED, STARRY-EYED VISION FOR PLAY

The coming year is shaping up to be the biggest year of play yet. The groundwork is laid for a state-of-the-art over-the-top playtopia, including a soaring climber and 10 sparkling new galleries sprinkled with favorite iconic experiences. The Museum continues important conversations on how to provide mind-blowing playful experiences for 550,000 annual visitors in the expanded Museum. As the Museum plans the expansion and renovation, it will look to visitors to share feedback and offer ideas that only tried-and-true users can contribute. The new Museum is destined to become a vibrant, play-infused centerpiece of downtown St. Paul and a favorite stomping ground for curious kids all over Minnesota and beyond.
THE GIFT-GIVERS, DREAM-MAKERS AND BENEFAC'TORS OF PLAY

Thank you so much for your support. This list recognizes donors who gave between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Minnesota Children’s Museum apologizes for any errors or omissions.

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$1,000,000+
State of Minnesota

$500,000 – $999,999
Target Foundation

$100,000 – $499,999
3M Foundation
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$50,000 – $999,999
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Congratulations to our good neighbor Travelers, a long-time supporter and recipient of the Play Maker’s Ball 2012 Friend of the Museum Award.

Thanks to Sweatpants Media for sharing their creative talent by producing the gala and other videos — which were inspired by playing at the Museum as kids.
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$25,000+
Bill and Amy McKinney
The Schmoker Family Foundation in support of the Plan for All program
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Melanie and Anthony Tichols
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Andrew Dick
Rachel and Donovan Walsh
Frank and Christine Wheeler
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Brett Turnquist
Jeanne Vergeront and
Andrew Dick
Rachel and Donovan Walsh
Frank and Christine Wheeler

Thank you to over 1,066 donors who support the Museum with gifts under $249.

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Chris Redlick
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Museum uniforms

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Promotional partner

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### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>June 30, 2012</th>
<th>June 30, 2011</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Land, Building, Equipment &amp; Exhibits, Net</td>
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**THE NUMBER CRUNCHING BEHIND THE PLAY MAKING**

Minnesota Children’s Museum’s FY12 financial performance remains strong with a 7% increase in total net assets from FY11.

The Museum’s financial strength lies in its diversity of revenue sources, including both earned and contributed income. Generous philanthropic giving represents 33% of total revenue, while admissions and memberships represent 30%, State of Minnesota bi-annual appropriation and Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment funding represents 19%, and program, investment and other income represent 18% of total revenue — providing a well-balanced income model.

The Museum, whose mission is “sparking children’s learning through play,” is proud to report that 67% of operating expenses are dedicated to programs. Exhibit and gallery improvements capitalized during the current year are depreciated over several years and excluded from current program expenses.

Overall, expenses increased 15% as the Museum initiated an exciting capital expansion project, welcomed more eager visitors and grew service beyond the St. Paul location to provide playful learning experiences to more of Minnesota’s children. The Museum completed the year with a 4% surplus of unrestricted funds.

The Museum’s financial strength lies in its diversity of revenue sources, including both earned and contributed income. Generous philanthropic giving represents 33% of total revenue, while admissions and memberships represent 30%, State of Minnesota bi-annual appropriation and Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment funding represents 19%, and program, investment and other income represent 18% of total revenue — providing a well-balanced income model.
### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

#### SUPPORT AND REVENUE

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<td>Investment &amp; Other Income</td>
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#### TOTAL REVENUE

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#### EXPENSES

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#### TOTAL EXPENSES

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</table>

#### NON-OPERATING ACTIVITY AND TRANSFERS

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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Designated Reserves</td>
<td>$ 30,000</td>
<td>(30,000)</td>
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#### TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th>$ 1,078,821</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contributions</td>
<td>$ 309,925</td>
<td>(30,000)</td>
<td>$ 798,896</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Admissions</td>
<td>1,336,199</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Memberships</td>
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<td>Program Income</td>
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#### NET ASSETS — Beginning of Year

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<th>$ 13,616,687</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contributions</td>
<td>$ 937,191</td>
<td>$ 860,000</td>
<td>$ 7,657,743</td>
<td>$ 4,161,753</td>
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<td>TOTAL NET ASSETS — Beginning of Year</td>
<td>$ 1,247,116</td>
<td>$ 830,000</td>
<td>$8,456,639</td>
<td>$ 4,161,753</td>
<td>$14,695,508</td>
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#### NET ASSETS — End of Year

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### SUPPORT & REVENUE

- **Grants and Contributions:** 33%
- **Government Agencies:** 13%
- **Museum Admissions:** 15%
- **Program Income:** 3%
- **Memberships:** 17%
- **Investment & Other Income:** 19%

### EXPENSES

- **Program:** 67%
- **Administrative:** 13%
- **Marketing & Promotion:** 10%
- **Fundraising:** 10%

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*Government funding, 19%, is significantly larger than the prior year due to the bi-annual state appropriation for general operations as well as Legacy-sponsored initiatives (the opening of a satellite museum in Rochester, Storyland tour and development of Smart Play Spots).*
Sparking children’s learning through play

MUSEUM RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL
Dr. Megan Gunnar, chair
Dr. Stephanie Carlson
Dr. Sara Langworthy
Dr. Michele M. Mazzocco
Barbara Murphy
Pete Ralston
Dr. Glenn Roisman
Dr. Amy Susman-Stillman
Dr. Albert Yonas