

# MUSEUM SPECIAL EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Announcing the first year of Minnesota Children's Museum's Presidential Luncheons! Hear Sarah Caruso, Museum president, and another guest speaker address a range of early childhood topics. The events will feature a light lunch as well as action steps on how guests to better the lives of children in our community.



## Healthy Kids. Healthy Lives.

Wednesday, October 28, 2009 • 11:30 a.m.

Olympic runner and Minnesota native, Carrie Tollefson will be the guest speaker.

Minnesota Children's Museum - Great Big Room

## Inspiring the Next Generation of Philanthropists

Monday, January 18, 2010 • 11:30 a.m.

Nathan Dungan is an industry thought-leader on helping youth and adults link their money decisions to their values.

Minnesota Children's Museum - Great Big Room

## InterActivity 2010: Invest Early. Inspire Growth.

Wednesday, May 5, 2010 • Time TBD

Minnesota Children's Museum - Great Big Room

Updates on speakers and topics can be found by checking [MCM.org](http://MCM.org).

## InterActivity 2010

Association of Children's Museums  
Annual International Conference

Thursday, May 6 - Saturday, May 8, 2010

Minnesota Children's Museum will be host to hundreds of museum professionals from numerous children's museums exploring topics related to the theme: "Invest Early. Inspire Growth."



## Grand Family Ball

Saturday, June 19, 2010 • 5:30 p.m.

Minnesota Children's Museum

Be sure to bring the kids for this unique experience that will inspire a spirit of giving in Minnesota's next generation of philanthropists! After nine years off-site, the gala returns to the Museum building in downtown St. Paul for a special ball for the whole family.



# KEEP THE MUSEUM DOORS OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN

Your ongoing support will help Minnesota families during these challenging times. Now more than ever parents need an affordable place to reduce stress and spend quality time with their children and each other.

Thank you!

Minnesota Children's Museum  
10 West 7th Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

Gift Amount:  
 \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as it appears on card) \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

## Thank you, Museum Sponsors:



RBC Wealth Management



Promotional Partner  
StarTribune.com

VOLUME 6  
FALL  
2009



# Minnesota Children's Museum • connections

A focus on Museum contributors and their impact

# INVEST EARLY INSPIRE GROWTH

The beliefs that drive the Museum's work

Investments in the early years of a child's life pay substantial returns as they develop and grow. Simply put: *Invest Early. Inspire Growth.* As we invest your support into the lives of our community's children, these essential principals drive every decision we make. We call them our foundational beliefs:

### 1 Early learning is the essential foundation of lifelong learning.

Children enter the world ready and eager to learn. Scientific research in child development over the last 30 years has led to an unprecedented level of evidence that the experiences and relationships children have in their early years are critically important. These experiences and relationships set the foundation for a child's cognitive, social and emotional health.

### 2 All children deserve respect and a time and place to be children.

A growing trend in our society is to hustle children from one formal activity to the next in an effort to keep them safe and stimulated. The Museum's informal approach – without strict agendas and demand for benchmark achievement – encourages concentration and independent thought. Museum programs and exhibits

*The Museum works very purposely to ensure that children of all abilities, backgrounds and ethnicities see themselves reflected within the Museum.*

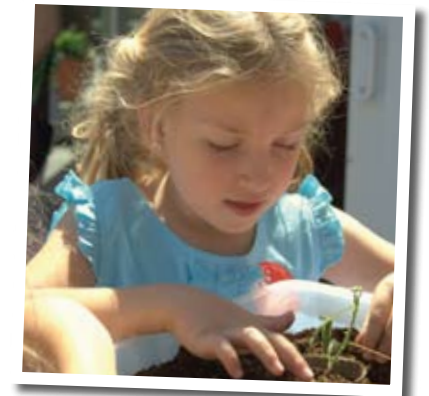
### 3 Families are our children's first teachers.

A child's family is her normal – her source of right and wrong, her understanding of other people, her source for self-esteem. Recognizing the critical importance of a child's family in early learning, the Museum offers supportive environments where families can play together. The Museum provides clear ways for families to encourage their children's learning – while respecting the rich diversity of what it means to be a "family."

### 4 Diverse perspectives enrich children's lives.

The world is increasingly diverse. We invite adults and children to create bridges of understanding by learning about new customs, values and people in a non-threatening, hands-on approach. Internationally respected diversity educator, Louise Derman Sparks, suggest this education

*"Play is the highest form of research."  
—Albert Einstein*



begin in a child's earliest years. The Museum works very purposely to ensure that children of all abilities, backgrounds and ethnicities see themselves reflected within the Museum, as well as have opportunities to learn about others.

### 5 Playing IS learning.

Einstein said it best, "Play is the highest form of research." Play is the primary vehicle by which children learn about themselves and their world. In play, children develop the qualities we most want to nurture – creativity, initiative, collaboration, problem solving and courage. All of these skills are foundations for academic learning, and more importantly, keys to social and emotional health. We embrace these throughout Museum experiences. After all, who are we to quibble with Einstein? ●

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Q & A WITH CURRENT BOARD MEMBER AND PAST GALA CHAIR, LINDSAY GRAVES

## What do you value about Minnesota Children's Museum? What excites you?

Children need a place to play and laugh and learn in a safe and engaging environment. What I value about the Museum is their commitment to making that experience possible for all children through their Access program. Every year thousands of children, who might not otherwise be able to, have access to the resources of the Museum through this important program.

## Why do you consider it important to support the Museum?

Because the quality of early childhood education affects everyone, and the Museum is one of Minnesota's premier resources for families and young children. All of us benefit when we invest in the early years of a child's life. When we attend to the emotional and educational needs of children, it saves vast amounts of time, energy and money that would be necessary to correct or assist them later in life.

## What do your children get out of a visit to the Museum?

An opportunity to play and laugh and learn in an environment where it's okay to be messy and take risks, to try new things and to explore who they are while expanding what they know. When children are given a safe and supportive environment to explore and be creative, the learning flows naturally.

## What do you get out of a visit to Minnesota Children's Museum?

A chance to watch my children play and learn and laugh. While they are a little older now, we have such fantastic memories of times at the Museum. When I am there it is a joy to see other children and families interacting. It's the interactions that makes it so valuable.

## If Minnesota Children's Museum closed its doors today, what would be lost?

On the simple end of things what would be lost is a lot of childhood happiness and fond

memories. In the bigger picture though, a great resource for quality, early childhood education would be lost and families, daycares, preschools and classrooms all around the greater metro and the state would suffer as a result.

## What are your philanthropic priorities?

Not only is it to improve the lives of those whose circumstances have rendered them less fortunate, but also to instill a perspective in my own life and the lives of my children of the challenges many people experience.

In a world where we want to give our children the best of everything, I feel a need to offset a sense of entitlement. It's important that they see value being placed on giving back because it moves everyone forward. I want my children to be aware that while many people might not have to think twice about spending an afternoon at the Museum, for other families it's only a reality if people care enough to make it so.



## Lindsay & Ben Graves

with their children Camden, MijaBella and Baktiyar

*She and her husband, Ben, have been Museum members since 2002 and donors since 2006.*

*photos courtesy of the Graves family*

# Your Gifts are Bringing Dinosaurs to Life at Minnesota Children's Museum

Only a handful of things can get children excited like dinosaurs. These giants from long ago have a way of capturing the imagination like few other things can. So, when it the opportunity arose for the Museum to build a dinosaur-themed exhibit, we jumped at the chance.

## A clear winner

Kristin Nielsen, the Museum's exhibit development manager says, "Most children and adults are interested in dinosaurs, and their natural interest is a great entry point to learning about paleontology and life on Earth in the distant past. It has broad appeal in terms of age and gender. In fact, we recently tested several exhibit topics with our visitors, and 'dinosaurs' came out as the clear winner."

*Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice*, which opens December 19, will take visitors back in time to explore the late Cretaceous Period when dinosaurs last roamed the earth. Once in the exhibit, they will discover dinosaur habitats to better understand how these mysterious animals lived, and use inquiry skills to examine what the dinosaurs left behind.

## Face-to-face with a Tiroodon

Typically, children encounter dinosaurs on the pages of a book or as petrified bones behind a glass wall. At Minnesota Children's Museum, they'll see them face-to-face, literally able

to immerse themselves into an entire prehistoric world. A key component of this exhibit is the construction of two sculpted dinosaurs, a Tiroodon and the larger Edmontosaurus. These original pieces will give children the rare opportunity to have a true hands-on encounter with life-sized and life-like dinosaurs.

## Prehistoric fun to exercise bodies and imaginations

"The exhibit builds on children's fascination with dinosaurs," states Mary Weiland, a Museum exhibit developer. "It combines large motor skills with dramatic play for unique whole-body, age-appropriate activities, like sitting in a nest of Tiroodon eggs; clambering through a bog walk; touching large, realistic, sculpted dinosaurs; and donning vests and goggles to uncover fossils."

Another exciting piece of the exhibit will be its focus on both hot and cold climates. Recent scientific research has uncovered that dinosaurs actually lived above the Arctic Circle. *Dinosaurs: Land of*

*Fire and Ice* will be the first child-centered exhibit in the country dedicated to this expanded understanding of dinosaurs' habitat and range. Highlighting these two distinct climates will be a large volcano that offers a fun and compelling transition between the land of fire and the land of ice.

Donors' support is vital to making this exhibit a reality. "We couldn't bring these ancient creatures to life in such a uniquely child-focused way without the support of our donors," responded Sarah Caruso, president, when speaking to the importance of Museum contributors to the development process. Thank you for bringing dinosaurs to life!

*"We couldn't bring these ancient creatures to life in such a uniquely child-focused way without the support of our donors."*



December 19, 2009 - May 31, 2010

**Access Progress Report**  
from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

Weaving Resources  
*St. Paul Public School field trips to the Museum that support classroom curriculum and state learning standards*  
Total Attendance:  
**8,198**  
3% increase

Target Free Third Sundays  
*Every third Sunday of each month playing and learning at the Museum is free*  
Total Attendance:  
**30,650**  
8% increase

Head Start Family Nights  
*Special nights for Head Start families*  
Total Attendance:  
**2,895**  
8% increase

Passport to Play  
*Free and discount library passes in Ramsey and Dakota Counties*  
Total Attendance:  
**11,246**

Access Program Memberships  
*Visits from Museum members with a free Access Program Memberships*  
Total Attendance:  
**11,621**  
48% increase