All aboard! The most famous #1 blue engine will be back in the station on Saturday, May 26 with a Members-Only Preview Party on Friday, May 25. Start your summer vacation on the right track at the Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) with Thomas & Friends™: Explore the Rails! Inspired by the beloved children’s television series, this interactive exhibit invites children and families to come explore the sights and sounds of the Island of Sodor, including Knapford Station, Sodor Steamworks, and more!

Visitors will meet classic characters such as Thomas, Percy, Victor, and others while engaging in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) based adventures. Families are in for the ride of the summer, helping Thomas and his friends solve challenges from sorting luggage and livestock and suit up as the conductor to sell tickets to engineering their very own train track. Climb inside Thomas’ cab and explore the engine’s inner workings, fix Percy’s wobbly wheels, and pull levers for train noises in this fun-filled exhibit that brings Thomas’ world to life. While in Sodor, Thomas & Friends™ fans of all ages can view episodes and classic model trains from the original show!

Full steam ahead to MCM this summer to take an imaginative trip to the Island of Sodor with Thomas & Friends™ while learning team-building skills and STEAM literacy through playful learning experiences. As children confront new challenges and test their abilities, the smiling faces of Thomas & Friends™ are there to offer encouragement and remind children how ‘really useful’ we all are.
While STEM programming has become increasingly popular in schools and community initiatives, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) fills an important programs gap in creative thinking through the addition of the arts. By incorporating cultural arts, including music, theatre, dance, language arts, and visual arts, STEAM education provides a meaningful context for understanding our world and examining challenges in new ways.

Jana Perry, Director of Education and Programs, explains why STEAM is one of MCM’s primary focuses. “In order for children to be successful as adults in an ever-changing workforce,” she says, “STEAM ensures they have the most up-to-date technological skills and teaches children to think in a creative and systematic way when dealing with problems.”

Creative problem-solving is essential to future success in the workplace, but adding arts to traditional STEM programs, Perry says, also “gives children a voice through their artwork. We make sure we dedicate a certain amount of time to art for art’s sake.” STEAM incorporates STEM-based learning with arts education to create a unique approach to viewing and interacting with the world. Through STEAM, learners of all types can make connections in more meaningful, engaging ways.

“MCM has used STEAM to address conservation, measurement, coding, architecture, robotics, creating submarines, and even something as simple as planting a garden,” Perry says. Because STEAM can be applied to so many topics, children remain interested and engaged. More importantly, Perry notes, “MCM’s inquiry-based questions put the child at the center of their own learning.”

The scientific method and the creative process complement each other and used together through hands-on STEAM programming (like Know to Grow, Tinker with Tuesday, and Question It? Discover It!) can empower children to problem solve in a creative and innovative way.
SUMMER CAMP

At MCM, chess is not just a game, it is an important educational opportunity. Director of Education and Programs Jana Perry explains the importance of chess in MCM’s educational programming. “Chess teaches children to think strategically in a game setting,” Perry comments. “It allows children to look ten steps ahead in a game, and then as they master certain skills they can think strategically in any problem they have, whether it be a math problem or personal problem in their life.” By engaging critical thinking skills, chess allows children to learn about strategy, patience, creative problem-solving, and hard work in a STEM-based, hands-on environment. These skills help children in and out of the classroom. “A child that has some self-realization about their decision making and can see how a negative or positive decision can impact them can make a more informed decision about their future,” Perry says. Chess provides children with the tools to understand more fully cause and effect in a logical way.

Jeff Bolhuis, Vice President of the Mississippi Scholastic Chess Association, Jeff Bulington, director of the Franklin County Chess Education Project, and Jerry Nash, National Chess Education Consultant, have worked with MCM staff and educators to bring chess tournaments to MCM and explore the educational opportunities chess provides. MCM will host two chess tournaments this year. Join us for the Beginner Chess Tournament on September 15, 2018 and help us celebrate National Chess Day with a tournament on October 13, 2018.

IMAGINATION AT PLAY!

With Imagination Playground™, the only limit of the big blue blocks is your imagination! This traveling exhibit encourages children to get creative and have fun through interactive, unstructured free play. By moving and manipulating the blocks around them, children discover new ways to envision the world and create new experiences and environments. Re-imagine space—and the stories that inhabit it—with play that empowers children through self-directed, STEAM-based learning.

Imagination Playground™ is ideal for building strength, spatial awareness, creativity, cooperation, and imagination. As children play, they learn key social, emotional, and mental skills that will encourage growth later in life. Perfect for schools, educators have used Imagination Playground to teach communication, logic, and creativity. Challenge children to build the tallest structure, work as teams, or tell a story, and watch as they discover the power of imagination!

Are you looking for something that is fun and educational for your child this summer? Children ages five through ten can register for MCM’s week-long day camps to experience exciting adventures all summer long. At MCM, campers can discover the great outdoors, build new worlds out of everyday objects, journey to space with NASA, or become a mad scientist in the kitchen. Come celebrate curiosity and the power of the imagination at MCM’s summer camps. All camp sessions are not only fun, but also encourage learning through hands-on activities, even when school is out!

Available from June through August, MCM’s six unique camps are great for children with a variety of interests, from painting like an artist to building a rocket. Campers will have fun and learn at the same time through STEAM-based programming, including experiments, reading, and active play. With interactive, educational lesson plans and guided play, campers are encouraged to explore and engage with the world around them, all while making new friends every week!

Request to rent Imagination Playground™ by visiting MCM’s website, mschildrensmuseum.org.
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As adorable as they are amazing, Dash and Dot are the charming little robots zooming around MCM this summer. Based on code, Dash and Dot move around the museum helping children and families learn the basics of coding in a fun and interactive way. Dash and Dot will sing and dance with museum guests while teaching children about robotics and problem-solving skills.

Geared towards first through third graders, Dash and Dot allow children to engage in STEM-focused learning in a unique, active way. By entering a few simple codes, visitors can command Dash and Dot to zip across the art room, dance around the atrium, and even respond to a voice.

Dash and Dot utilize visual-based coding to teach children how technology works in their daily lives and how STEM can be used to make a better future. These fun little robots allow children to experience the possibilities robotics—and the power of imagination—can offer.

A graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, Zack Looney is excited to further education in Mississippi as MCM’s STEAM Coordinator, a position where he can encourage interactive learning through STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programming for children at MCM and through outreach across the state. “I also strive to reach those outside of the museum by participating in programs in settings beyond our walls,” Looney says.

STEAM programming at MCM may be new, but Looney emphasizes its importance in igniting a thirst for discovery in children. According to Looney, STEAM not only “builds a sense of interconnectedness between different fields, but is also important to education.” Interactive learning is critical to MCM, and Looney ensures that STEAM programming furtthers that goal. He explains, “A child that is able to make the connections between science and technology, engineering, and art will be able to think and create in unique ways that will be so helpful for them going forward.”

On a typical day, Looney leads daily STEAM workshops including Making Masters, which mixes art with traditional STEM activities to enrich learning. STEAM programs change weekly, and Looney incorporates a wide range of exciting, hands-on educational opportunities for children and families. “We have done programs that deal with pollution, rockets, famous artists, bridge construction, and so much more,” he says.
NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As the MCM-Meridian project continues to gain momentum, support from the MCM-Meridian Advisory Committee is especially important. They act as a working subcommittee of the statewide Mississippi Children’s Museum board of directors and are the regional governing body which oversees and makes advisements relating to the East Mississippi satellite campus.

Kelvin Jackson, a Kemper County native, is a Supervisory District Conservationist for the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service. He currently serves as a Board Member on the Lauderdale County School Board and the Boys and Girls Club of East Mississippi. For Jackson, access to education is vital. “The foundation of my career path was poured in rural Kemper County with the hopes and dreams of having the same opportunities as those around this great state,” he says. “Being a member of the Lauderdale County Board of Education, I believe the more positive exposure we can provide to our children will in turn prepare them to be more productive citizens.” As a member of the MCM-Meridian Advisory Committee, Jackson will continue to support increased educational resources for the children of East Mississippi.

Jim McGinnis, III is the President and CEO of McGinnis Lumber Company in Meridian. He is also a Board Member of the Phil Hardin Foundation and Community Bank and is the Past Chairman of the North American Wholesale Lumber Association. He has served as an integral part of the MCM-Meridian Site Committee and was instrumental to MCM-Meridian’s procurement of its future home. McGinnis explains his involvement in the inception of MCM-Meridian: “The children’s museum will be an important addition to downtown Meridian’s growing arts and education environment. I’ve lived in Meridian my entire life, and there has never been a more exciting time for enjoying food, shopping, music, sports and other cultural amenities,” he says. “MCM-Meridian is just the latest entry into Meridian’s bid to become the premier tourist destination in our state,” McGinnis continues. "I am thrilled to have this fantastic children’s museum coming to my hometown.”

Leigh Anne Whittle of Newton, MS is an active community volunteer. She is a Board Member of the Community Foundation of East Mississippi and the former Newton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director. She is an early education advocate with 14-years-experience teaching in both the Newton Public Schools and Lamar School in Meridian. “I was honored when asked to help out with making the children’s museum of Meridian a reality,” Whittle says. “As a former elementary teacher, I know the importance of building up a child with many resources outside of the classroom, and as a Newton County resident, I’ll look forward to the children in our community to be able to visit this valued resource.”
This April, Soulé Steam Works Mississippi Industrial Heritage Museum in Meridian was host to the sounds of innovation as children and families from around Mississippi came to celebrate the power of creation at the Meridian Mini Maker Faire. The historic factory was filled with technology—new and old—that showcased invention, creativity, and resourcefulness. Families were encouraged to meet the makers and explore the possibilities of design and imagination. MCM-Meridian was excited to be a part of this experience by leading STEAM-based, hands-on activities like helping write code for our robot friend Dash and building an airtight submarine.

“They’re using recycled plastic bottles to be the hull of their vessel,” said Liz Wilson, MCM-Meridian Executive Director in an interview with the Meridian Star. “Then they’re incorporating the arts by giving it a personality. Most of them have turned their vessel into some sort of magical creature that is going to take to the seas.”

The Mini Maker Faire is the perfect place to foster a spirit for tinkering. “We want to inspire all of Mississippi’s children to achieve their full potential,” Wilson said, “and have a joy for learning and a thirst for knowledge.”
LAUDERDALE COUNTY VISITS MCM

You don’t have to be from Jackson to enjoy MCM. This spring, seventy-third-graders and ninety-five kindergarten students from Clarkdale Elementary in Meridian, MS recently visited the most inspirational place imaginable. The third-grade students participated in the interactive Journey of Digestion program, which uses tight and sponges to demonstrate how food is digested, while the kindergarten students completed Bricks 4 Kids® STEAM activities, a program that uses Legos to teach engineering and science concepts to children of all ages.

“My third graders are still talking about the excitement they experienced on our recent trip to MCM in Jackson,” Gwen Rockett, Clarkdale Elementary third-grade teacher, commented. “A children’s museum in Meridian would be a treasured asset that would provide an environment conducive for all types of powerful educational experiences,” she continued. The Mississippi Children’s Museum—Meridian (MCM-Meridian) will provide the children of East Mississippi a fun, interactive space to learn and play close to home.”

In the last three months, over 35 schools from East Mississippi have visited MCM on field trips, all expressing their excitement of having this transformative resource in their own ‘backyard’ in Meridian.”

MCM-MERIDIAN DONORS

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9 | MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN’S MUSEUM | SUMMER 2018 • PLAYBOOK
MCM-MERIDIAN DONORS | KRISTEN & ROBERT SMITH

Kristen Smith and Robert Smith of Glass Inc. in Meridian have championed MCM-Meridian since early in its fundraising as both donors and volunteers. The father-daughter duo has helped secure nearly $300,000 for the project and are active members of MCM-Meridian Partners, where Kristen serves on the board.

‘Glass Inc. was involved with MCM in Jackson when it was built,’ Robert explains. ‘During construction, we learned what the museum was all about and what it would do for the youth of our state. We were naturally excited to hear about the plans to build a satellite museum here in our hometown and decided to help make it a reality,’ he said.

‘From the first time I got wind that Meridian was getting a satellite museum, I could not wait to get involved,’ Kristen added. ‘Our community and our children will tremendously benefit from the multidimensional learning opportunities that the museum will provide. I could not think of a better project to get on board with.’

MCM-MERIDIAN ARCHITECT | JACK ALLIN

Nestled in downtown Meridian, MCM-Meridian’s light-filled, colorful facade will invite children and families into a world of imagination and discovery. At least, that is what Jack Allin, Principal Architect at Mississippi architecture firm Weir Boerner Allin, has planned. Allin is spearheading the design of MCM’s new satellite museum, which will provide a safe and engaging space for children, families, and educators. Allin’s vision celebrates East Mississippi and Meridian, and his appreciation for Meridian’s history and development are reflected in subtle ways in his design.

Allin is a Mississippi native who received his bachelors from Mississippi State University and has trained in New York City, Atlanta, and Birmingham with extensive experience designing schools as well as branded institutions. Married to a Meridian native, Allin and his family are active in Jackson’s Belhaven Neighborhood, St. Andrew’s Episcopal Cathedral, and the Mississippi Museum of Art where he serves as a trustee. Allin is excited to be a part of the revitalization efforts in Meridian. “So many great things are happening in Meridian right now, especially in Downtown Meridian and the central business corridor. Being a part of the design process for MCM-Meridian has been a rewarding experience.” Allin’s designs for MCM-Meridian showcase his dedication to Mississippi and the people that make it great.

MCM-MERIDIAN VOLUNTEER | BETH WHITEHEAD

As MCM-Meridian Partners President, Beth Whitehead is a strong supporter of MCM’s mission and has been instrumental to MCM-Meridian. “Having the Mississippi Children’s Museum in Meridian will provide many opportunities and resources for the children in our area to grow, learn, and explore,” Whitehead says. A retired occupational therapist and mother of three, she became involved with MCM-Meridian Partners as a way to stay active in the Meridian community and continue providing educational opportunities for the children of East Mississippi.

“The MCM-Meridian Partner’s volunteer group is important in providing support for the mission and vision of the museum,” Whitehead explains. “Members of the MCM Partner’s group will be given opportunities to serve the children of our area by using their time and talents to promote the events and activities of the museum.” Whitehead has stayed active not just as MCM-Meridian Partners President, but by also volunteering at events such as Dr. Seuss Silly Birthday Celebration and the Lauderdale County Agri-Center for Conservation Camp. Her devotion to the children of east Mississippi is obvious as she works with children during MCM-Meridian Partners events. Through MCM-Meridian, Whitehead says, “We are excited to see the possibilities and opportunities the Children’s Museum will bring to Meridian!”
Since the beginning of the school year, MCM has been designated as one of Jackson Prep’s partners and has connected with students through volunteer and fundraising opportunities. Kelly Headley, Director of Community Service at Jackson Prep, coordinated all activities for this partnership, including selecting Amanda Roberts to be the liaison for MCM to work with throughout the year.

Students are encouraged to get involved with events, projects, and ongoing programs at MCM like Park After Dark, where students collected over 10,000 pieces of candy for the event. Students also collected art supplies for MCM, including watercolor paints, crayons, glue, construction paper, and yarn.

In addition to these concentrated “drives,” the junior class holds a huge garage sale every year and donates a portion of the proceeds to their partners of the year. This year, their donation was over $4,000, which will have a huge impact on the LeFleur Museum District and its member museums. Jackson Prep’s support of MCM this year has been invaluable and speaks of the core values the school has instilled in its students.
Malcom Kemp has been involved with MCM Partners for ten years, but that hasn’t slowed him down. “In 2008, our daughter Sarah Young became involved in the Children’s Educational Fair and encouraged my wife Paula and me to join her in supporting our new community,” Malcom says. “We have remained involved since then.” Malcom has stayed true to that spirit, staying involved with MCM Partners throughout the years.

You can find him at many of MCM’s events, often volunteering but always having a good time talking with children and their families. Over the years, Malcom has read The Giving Tree in the Literacy Garden, played Santa Claus during the holidays, and worked one-on-one with children during MCM’s Read to Succeed camp. For Malcom, the most important part of being a part of MCM is “being around people with the common goal of helping the children of Mississippi.” His steadfast support of MCM is what makes Malcom such a valuable member of MCM Partners and this year’s recipient of the Preston Myers Hays Award of Light, which recognizes an MCM Partners member each year for their service to the museum.

Since MCM Partners began, they have raised over $1 million. MCM Partners is integral to MCM, and its volunteers are a key part of MCM’s success. “I would encourage anyone to get involved with Partners,” Porter says. “The satisfaction of assisting this wonderful museum in catering to the needs of the children of our state is incalculable.” This engagement, both with MCM as well as the children and families it serves, is what makes MCM Partners so successful.

Alicen Blanchard, President of the MCM Partners Board of Directors Executive Committee for 2018-19, looks forward to continuing MCM Partner’s important work. “I’m very proud of what we have been able to achieve so far,” Blanchard says. “I’m looking forward to, of course, raising more money and reaching more children next year.” Among its goals, MCM Partners hopes to increase membership, continue literacy programs, get more volunteers involved, and support MCM-Meridian.

Blanchard looks forward to beginning the next MCM Partners year with its signature summer fundraising event for young professionals, Neon Night, on July 14, 2018.

SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018
At MCM, interactive and collaborative play isn’t just limited indoors—the Gertrude C. Ford Literacy Garden gives children and caregivers a fun outdoor space to explore nature in a hands-on way. Surrounded by whimsical sculptures and innovative technology, children and families can learn about plants and their uses as a pollinator habitat or food source.

Come watch flowers bloom and vegetables grow while learning about the life cycle of a plant as well as healthy choices, plant identification, and the ecosystem. Here, visitors can participate in every stage of the planting process, from burying seeds to harvesting vegetables.

STEAM Coordinator Zack Looney encourages children to get involved: “We want to give children the opportunity to get their hands dirty and learn about how to grow a plant. They learn that anybody can do it. We give them the tools that they needed, and they put the gloves on.”

As part of this year’s Bunnies and Butterflies celebration, MCM staff and volunteers released 150 Painted Lady butterflies to help pollinate all of MCM’s gardens, including the Literacy Garden and Pollinators Playground. These beautiful, hard-working insects help pollinate over 75% of the museum’s flowering plants, and vegetable crops. You may not notice the hummingbirds, bats, bees, beetles, butterflies, and flies that carry pollen from one plant to another as they collect nectar, but you would notice if they weren’t doing their jobs. During the event, children were invited to adopt butterflies while learning about the ecosystem.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: KNOW TO GROW

Join us in the Literacy Garden every Saturday @ 11:00 am!

Since 2015, Feild Co-Operative Association, Inc. has been a generous sponsor of MCM’s Know to Grow program, which encourages children and families to get outside and get active through hands-on gardening. But while Feild Co-Operative has focused its sponsorship on Know to Grow for over two years, they have been an active supporter of MCM for more than ten. It is obvious that education is vitally important to Feild Co-Operative. Through their philanthropy, MCM has been able to combine STEM learning with literacy in Know to Grow as well as champion interactive learning throughout the museum.

Feild Co-Operative’s scope is not limited to children. They support increased access to higher education in Mississippi through scholarships to college and graduate students. Mac McGehee III, Vice President of Feild Co-Operative Association, comments that “education is important not only to the health and wellbeing of an individual but significant to the stability and wellbeing of our communities.” Established by Bernard B. Jones and his brother Montfort Jones in 1919, Feild Co-Operative Association, Inc. seeks to enrich the lives of Mississippians by rewarding a desire for a lifetime of learning. “Education has proven time and time again to reduce poverty, improve healthy living, and spur economic growth,” McGehee says. “To that end Feild Co-Operative is wholeheartedly committed.”
**QUARTERLY DONORS**

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<tr>
<td>Malinda and Jim Warren</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$5,000+</td>
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**$1,000 - $4,999**

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**$500 - $999**

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**$100 - $499**

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In the coming year, MCM will begin construction of WonderBox, an exciting new exhibit that will combine hands-on activities with inquiry-based learning to create an immersive STEAM experience for children and their families.

According to MCM Director of Exhibits and Facilities Charley Frey, the exhibit will encourage creativity and imagination. "WonderBox is being designed because children are curious and wonder how things work. This new space will invite children to figure out how things work at basic level," he explains. By tapping into children's natural curiosity, WonderBox empowers children to be inquisitive and creative in everything they do. Children like to see things move and take them apart to see how something works, Frey says, and this is the opportunity to get to put things back together or maybe rebuild it in a better way than before.
DID YOU KNOW?
The use of steam locomotives developed through the 19th century before diesel and electric locomotives began to replace them in the 20th century.

WORD SCRAMBLE!
Can you unscramble the following words?

EINCSCE ________________
TCHEOLNGYO ____________
NGENIREIEGN ____________
TRA ________________
HTAM ________________

Chalk Paint Recipe

- 1/3 cup of water
- 1/3 cup of corn starch
- 5-6 drops of food coloring
- Cups or jars for each color
- Fork or whisk

1. Mix water and cornstarch in a cup or jar.
2. Stir the mixture with a fork or whisk until the cornstarch is dissolved.
3. Add food coloring and stir. (If you want brighter colors, add a few more drops of food coloring.)
4. Dip a paintbrush or sponge into your chalk paint and enjoy decorating your porch or driveway!
MCM SUMMER 2018 CALENDAR

Please note that these dates and events are subject to change. Visit mschildrensmuseum.org for an up-to-date schedule.

JUNE

9
Saturday
Visitng Artist Pam Kinsey
1:00 - 4:00 pm

MAGiC MONDoNS
OPEN EVERY MONDAY IN JUNE & JULY!

500x360

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Join us for extra hours of inspiration and The Food Lab @ 3:30 pm!

JULY

14
Saturday
Neon Night
adults-only (21+)
Fundraising event
8:00 pm - 12:00 am

21
Saturday
STEAM
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

22
Sunday
Lights! Camera! Imaginaition!
Auditions
1:00 - 4:00 pm

MCM HONORS OUR MILITARY FAMILIES!

BLUE STAR PROGRAM
MAY 26 - LABOR DAY
MCM offers free admission for military personnel and their families.

AUG

11
Saturday
Outreach:
Bright Lights
Belhaven Nights

18
Saturday
Outreach:
Mississippi Book Festival

SEPT

8
Saturday
$5.99 College Savings Day
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

15
Saturday
Beginner Chess Tournament
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

22
Saturday
MS Science Fest
District wide event
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

22
Saturday
Discovery Night:
Around the Campfire
6:00 - 9:00 pm

28
Saturday
Very Eric Carle
Members-Only Preview Party
5:30 - 7:00 pm

MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

www.mschildrensmuseum.org • 601.981.5469

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WE TAKE FUN SERIOUSLY!

A signature project of the Junior League of Jackson
This project is partially funded through a grant by Visit Jackson.