

On December 8, 2020, we celebrated the Mississippi Children's Museum's 10th birthday. In reflecting on our last ten years of operation, it is amazing to think back to where we started, realize just how far we have come, and see the positive trajectory of our work ahead. When we began this endeavor, we were determined to create a place that would provide unparalleled experiences because we felt that Mississippi's children deserved something truly inspiring, designed just for them.

Since MCM opened, we have developed award-winning exhibits and programming, hosted thousands of field trips, and welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors from across Mississippi, the US, and other foreign countries. In a few short months, we will be opening a second museum, the Mississippi Children's Museum-Meridian, something we never would have thought possible ten years ago. Throughout all of this, we have placed children at the center of everything we do. That has challenged us to be unparalleled in our own efforts and also relentless in asking, "What do children need and how can we inspire them?"

This passion has led us to cultivate deep ties within our community, to collaborate in our work with like-minded individuals and organizations, and to create innovative resources and partnerships to address our children's most pressing needs. But more importantly, it

has taught us something we talk a lot about in the child development world—resilience—the ability to face adversity and turn potential setbacks into new opportunities.

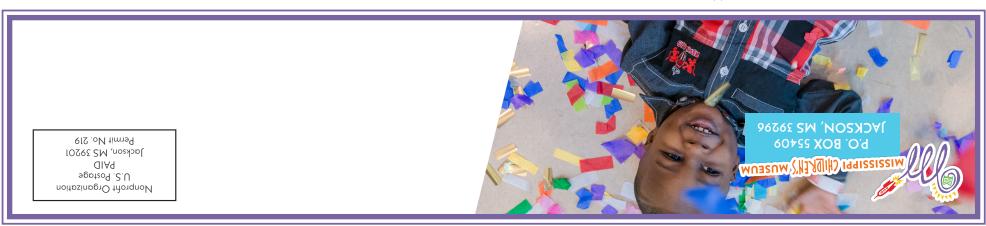
This last year, we had to completely rethink how to operate, which was hard, but the process also pushed us forward. From MCM's very beginning, we knew we would need to find creative ways to reach children outside our physical walls. And last year, we did just that. We discovered new ways to digitally deliver our weekly programming and created online and take-home resources to extend hands-on learning to children at home. We also provided educational resources and a safe environment for over 100 virtual learning students through our new program, Launch into Learning. That is definitely an accomplishment to celebrate. This hard work has taken place in tandem with efforts toward some new museum-based experiences. We have some pretty exciting things coming up so we hope to see you soon!



Gratefully,

Junn Janand

Susan Garrard, Mississippi Children's Museum President/CEO





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#### 10 Years of Celebration 2-3 Celebration of Education 4-5 MCM-Meridian **WonderBox** 7 MCM at Home 8-9 **Spring Events** 10 11 **Partners** Mississippi Thrive 12-13 Donors 14 LeFleur's Bluff Education & Tourism Partnership 15



# 10 YEARS OF INSPIRATION!

Throughout its short, ten-year operational history, the Mississippi Children's Museum has exemplified a culture of innovation and excellence. This is apparent, not only through the museum's many accolades and awards, but also through its steady and strategic growth. "As cultural institutions, children's museums serve multi-faceted roles. They are at once tourism attractions, informal educational entities, and community conveners. Balancing these roles is complex, which is why it is so important to keep our mission at the forefront of our thinking," says Susan Garrard, MCM President and CEO.

A tenacious commitment to quality has translated into groundbreaking work. In 2014, MCM opened its first museum expansion, the Gertrude C. Ford Literacy Garden, which created a much-needed outdoor exhibit space and a first-of-its kind, educational resource that combines experiential artworks with unique landscape architecture. "This was an important achievement on several fronts—our first capital campaign since opening, our first exhibit gallery completely designed in-house, and our first project awarded an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant which is highly competitive," says Garrard. MCM's growth isn't just in its tangible exhibit experiences, but also in its programmatic offerings. Since opening, MCM has hosted thousands of field trips, developed daily and weekly programs that incorporate all five of MCM's learning initiatives, created events that have become beloved annual traditions, and delivered outreach programming throughout the state.

MCM also has cultivated strong community partnerships, which have allowed the museum to expand its work. A LeFleur Museum District member since 2014, MCM hosted the inaugural Mississippi Science Fest in 2016 to provide hands-on exploration of STEM fields. In 2017, the festival expanded to include all four member museums. By 2019, attendance had more than doubled and MSF had been named the Mississippi Tourism Association's "Small Festival of the Year" and a "Top 20 Event" by the Southeastern Tourism Society. None of these accomplishments would be possible without sustained, ongoing community support and good fiscal stewardship. "There are donors who made capital gifts to help us build MCM who have continued supporting us every step of the way since. In 2019, Charity Navigator gave us a Top 5 rating for all privately funded museums nationally and Guidestar awarded a Platinum Seal of Transparency, a testament to our commitment to financial sustainability," says Garrard. With these foundations, MCM is well positioned to launch into its next ten years.

Mississippi Children's Museum opens to the public and is awarded "Travel Attraction of the Year" by the MS Tourism Association

Calendar

Hosted first summer visiting exhibit: Storyland

16

Opened "The Literacy Garden" – 15,000 square feet of outdoor, interactive exhibit space

Started "Planting the Seeds to Read" family literacy program

Created and fabricated MCM's first traveling exhibit literacy for toddlers and Roll Match Read



# F4 A1 C3 E1 S1 THROUGH THE YEARS!

MCM is grateful for the support from donors, sponsors, members, volunteers, staff and visitors for making 10 years of MCM a reality! As we look back over the years, we asked a few of our longtime supporters why the Mississippi Children's Museum is important to them.

#### The Kasper Family, MCM Members

"MCM is a safe and happy place for our daughter to learn, play and grow. The people are great, every visit is warm and welcoming. We love it here and look forward to more visits to come!"



#### Frances Croft, MCM Partners' President

"MCM is a community of people - staff and volunteers - who have dedicated much of their life to give all of our children a special place for play and learning, right here in Mississippi, that is accessible to all."



#### Malik Shavers, MCM Volunteer Assistant

"To me, MCM means imagination, wonder, and service. The museum is a place where kids can dig and dive into their imagination with no limits."



#### James, Launch into Learning Student

"My favorite thing about the Museum is the Journey to the North Pole exhibit with the big slide! I'm really excited for all the new exhibits coming too like WonderBox."



Lauren Cantrell, MCM Member

"MCM is a place where our children and their

have such a special museum in Jackson that

"The Mississippi Children's Museum has met the needs of our community by creating a safe, educational and fun place that exists to remind us all that the lives and experiences of all children matter. Our social fabric is strengthened by the intentional actions of the Mississippi Children's Museum prioritizing and valuing families and children."

#### Holmes Adams, Chairman of Board of Managers **Luckyday Foundation**

"The Luckyday Foundation is grateful that the Children's Museum has used its contributions wisely and creatively in constructing the museum and formulating educational programs for the children of our state. Teaching young children to read is the bedrock for sound learning. We wish the museum continued success in the next decade."

# Cheryle M. Sims, President

Gertrude C. Ford Foundation

"Over 10 years ago, the Directors of the GCFF reviewed a tremendous set of plans provided by the Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM). We quickly knew we wanted to be involved in the lives of Mississippi's children through education, visual and performing arts and other programs. MCM was built to enhance the lives of our children and so many young people have been inspired by working with MCM's staff through their programs. Thanks to MCM, these children have learned to dream of a greater tomorrow.

It is difficult to distinguish between spectacular and excellent – those are the adjectives I would use to describe the impact and effect that MCM has had on our community. MCM has been one of the best investments made by our Foundation in the past decade.

#### Sheila B. Grogan, President Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation

"In the Mississippi Children's Museum in Jackson and Meridian, exhibits and programs are designed with an eye toward promoting active learning. Through the partnership with the museum, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is supporting playful, hands-on learning experiences for children, beginning in their earliest years, to build a foundation for healthy living that will lead them to future success."

#### James Caillier, Executive Director Patrick F. Taylor Foundation

"10 years ago, the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation was excited to become one of Mississippi Children's Museum's first sponsors to ensure its innovative World at Work exhibit could enrich the lives of Mississippi's children. The museum has achieved so much in such a short time, and we are proud to be a part of its story and a partner in bringing excellent educational experiences to children from across the state."

#### Jim Barksdale, Chairman of the Board and President Barksdale Management Corporation

One of the most rewarding investments our foundation has made is the Mississippi Children's Museum. It has made a significant impact on children's education in Metro area. The museum is extremely well done, very well maintained, and updated, and certainly is something Donna and I are very proud of.



Began the fundraising and planning for MCM's first satellite museum to be located in Meridian, MS, piloted the Mississippi Science Festival, and created MCM's second traveling exhibit focused on literacy: Story to Stage

CM Partners, the museum's support group, reaches over \$1,200,000 cumulative donations and the Mississippi Science Festival is awarded Small Festival of the Year

Began assisting student with virtual school and enrichment 'Launch into Learning'

Partnered with the B.B. King Museum to bring "Planting the Seeds to Read" family literacy program to families in the Delta and created and opened MCM's first family holiday exhibit: Journey to the North Pole, Finalist for the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Services

President's Circle, MCM's youth volunteer leadership program begins with 15 founding members



## **CELEBRATION EDUCATION**

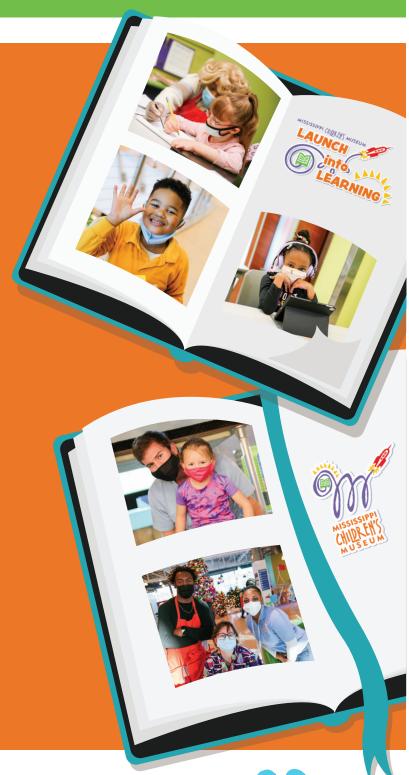
# **Crisis Creates Innovation**

MCM is a place where children, families, and educators come to experience innovative, hands-on learning. So, what does a museum like ours do when faced with a global pandemic that requires visitors to stay home and socially distance? We do what we do best – we come up with creative ways to meet the immediate needs of our community. During Mississippi's shelter-in-place order, schools and families suddenly found themselves scrambling to ensure that children were able to continue their learning from home. The Mississippi Children's Museum quickly and creatively shifted programming priorities to meet this immediate need.

The museum pivoted its social media channels to provide live story times and deliver its regular weekly programming in a virtual format. Additionally, MCM launched a new webpage, MCM at Home, to house digital content including coloring pages, educational videos, and comprehensive activity guides. MCM supplied more than 1,200 activity kits with school and enrichment materials to families without access to online learning and produced two special editions of the Playbook to disseminate additional educational content with more than 175,000 copies delivered statewide.

"Crisis will push you forward," says Susan Garrard, MCM President and CEO. "We've talked for years about creating digital and take-home materials to expand MCM's educational capabilities." But MCM did not stop there. When the Jackson Public School (JPS) District announced that classes would resume virtually for the Fall semester, MCM decided to pivot its operating model to assist these students during the week through Launch into Learning, a program that would provide tutoring, afterschool, and day camp services to JPS families in need. The museum was able to provide a vital service to our education community, as well as open on the weekends for members and public visitors. "With our longstanding partnership with JPS, our 45,000 square foot space and state-of-the-art facilities, and a highly trained educational staff, this seemed like an obvious role for us to step into," says Garrard.

This innovative approach has made a tangible impact for the more than 100 students served. "Launch into Learning means my girls have a safe environment to do virtual school on a daily basis. This program has allowed students from JPS to have daily supervision as they complete their assignments to keep them from being at risk of falling behind," says Kim Wade, parent of a Launch into Learning student. "You all have been a Godsend."















## **CELEBRATION EDUCATION: MCM TRAVELS**



# MCM TRAVELS

#### Can't make it to the Mississippi Children's Museum this Spring?

Bring MCM Travels to your classroom with a traveling exhibit or instructional program. We have a variety of exhibits available for rental for an extended period of time. We bring them to you, set them up, and provide your staff the information needed to achieve the educational objectives of the exhibits. MCM also offers instructional programming for your classroom, which provides hands-on experiences that teach children in a fun and interactive way.





# Traveling Exhibits

- 1. Wonder of Wellness
- 2. Imagination Playground
- 3. Story to Stage

Traveling Programs

- 4. Get Heart Smart
- 5. Rigamajig
- 6. Hands-on STEAM Programs
- 7. Rocky the Reader

The mission of this exhibit is to help ensure the physical and mental health of Mississippi's children by increasing their parents' and caregivers' knowledge about physical activity, healthy eating habits, and social/emotional wellness. The focal point of Wonder of Wellness (WOW) is the brain, because proper brain development is paramount for overall well-being. Through play, children explore how creating healthy habits leads to the healthy development of their brains. This hands-on exhibit was made possible through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and produced in collaboration with 16 local organizations dedicated to the health and well-being of Mississisppi's children.









This traveling exhibit allows children to explore their theatrical side on an elevated stage, while fostering a creative, literary environment for children to create their own narrative.



With this
program, children
can explore
STEAM concepts
in new and exciting
ways by designing
unique objects and
growing practical
building skills with
Rigamajig's nuts
and bolts system.



Rocky the Reader
is an enthusiastic pup
who loves to read, play
literacy games, and
travel! Book an
appearance with
Rocky to engage
young learners, play
fun games, and
promote reading!

This traveling
exhibit allows
children to discover
and create through
unstructured free
play, by
manipulating big,
blue blocks into a
variety of
environments and
play spaces.



is designed to educate children about key facets of heart health, through an innovative and interactive program model.



• MCM's STEAM programs include awe-inspiring science experiments, extreme building challenges, learning how to harness the power of electricity, robot building, and tech-based art projects. With our extensive list of activities to choose from, you can customize a STEAM program to fit the needs of your classroom, grade level,



Scan the QR code for more information on MCM's awesome traveling exhibits!





# MCM-Meridian Flies High on Wings of Community Support

If you were to ask Elizabeth Wilson, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Children's Museum-Meridian, about the history of the project she would say that it is a story about community.

"In 2015, when Kim Bowers, Kim Denison, and I approached the Mississippi Children's Museum for professional guidance about starting a children's museum, they challenged us to raise \$25,000 in seed money to be able to conduct a feasibility study. We doubled that amount in less than a month, thanks to the support of our amazing community," says Wilson.

The feasibility study established what this initial fundraising success hinted—a groundswell of interest in establishing a children's museum in Meridian. A capital campaign kicked off in Spring 2016 with the Meridian Junior Auxiliary as the first donor and the Phil Hardin Foundation as the first signature donor.

"In that first year, over thirty amazing volunteers from husband-wife duos to father-daughter duos worked to secure pledges. A year into the campaign, one large corporate donor commented how humbling it was to see such a large donor list comprised mostly of families committed to making this dream a reality," says Wilson.





Volunteers also served on a site selection committee, which began work in 2016. Anticipating only serving a couple of months, this dedicated group met faithfully for almost a year reviewing more than a dozen sites. The final site was announced in November 2017 along with the project's second signature gift, a pledge from The Riley Foundation.

Local leaders and educators gathered to help shape the museum's exhibits by weaving in the heritage and culture that is unique to Meridian and East Mississippi. "The exhibit conceptual process is like nothing in which I have ever participated. Throughout two long days of brainstorming and breakout sessions, our exhibit designer sketched, and, by the end, had started to give shape to our exhibits from trains to planes to operas; it was truly magical.

In 2017, MCM-Meridian founded an arm of the statewide MCM-Partners group to begin implementing some preliminary inquiry-based learning events and immediately saw the enthusiasm for the museum's educational work. "By the third year, our Dr. Seuss' Silly Birthday Celebration saw more than 1,000 attendees. We didn't even have a home yet," says Wilson.

Perhaps most significant has been the overwhelming response to the public campaign which kicked off in May 2019.

"We have over 700 donors (and counting) from the Take Flight Mississippi challenge—gifts from as far away as the East and West coasts, to gifts from every surrounding county including Alabama, from city leaders, to children having lemonade stands. It's inspiring to see such an outpouring of community support," says Wilson.



Experience all that the Mississippi Children's Museum – Meridian has to offer with a family membership! If you plan on being a frequent visitor to our brand new, state-of-the-art facility, a membership is a wonderful way to save big and receive tons of members-only perks. Add a dual membership for an additional \$50.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera to become a member today! Your membership will begin on the first day we are open in the Spring of 2021.



WonderBox was conceived as both a physical exhibit and as a take-home experience too. MCM has partnered with Central Creativity in Laurel, MS to develop and produce WonderBox kits. These kits change seasonally and provide everything that a family needs to complete four different STEAM-based activities.

"These kits are makerspace experiences on-the-go. They have been designed so the entire family can participate. Our hope is that they can be a way for families to get comfortable with manipulating materials and that they can be a gateway for future STEAM exploration," says Perry.

WonderBox in Meridian will be available for exploration when MCM-Meridian opens in Spring 2021. WonderBox at MCM, which was funded by Entergy, an Institute of Museums and Library Services Museums for America grant, and a Hearst Foundations grant, is expected to open in Summer 2021.



# WHAT IS MCM AT HOME?

MCM at Home is designed to provide children and families with opportunities to learn through fun, engaging activities from the comfort of their own home! This online program allows families to access a wide variety of free resources such as educational videos, activity kits, DIY experiments, and so much more! These resources provide exciting, hands-on experiences focusing on literacy, the arts, science, health and nutrition, and can be accessed on our website anytime. Be sure to visit our MCM at Home page on our new website, launching in February 2021!

The MCM at Home program was initially created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that struck in early March of last year. While MCM was able to continue serving our local community through our Launch into Learning program, we did consequently shut our doors to the public for much of 2020. During that time, MCM at Home was created so that we could bring the Museum to YOU!

# CREATE A TIME CAPSULE

A time capsule is a container that people have filled with things that are relevant to their time, to be opened in the future. The oldest known time capsule in the United States was created by Samuel Adams and Paul Revere in 1795. When it was opened in 2015, it contained artifacts like coins from the 1600s and pages from newspapers. Below are two ways to create a time capsule for yourself, but there are many, many more!

Create a time capsule and hide it somewhere where you will forget about it! The back of your closet or underneath your bed is a great place. If you are hiding your time capsule inside where it is safe from the weather, you can use just about any container. An old thermos or metal water bottle, a lunchbox, or a shoebox would all work!

Think about what you want to put in your time capsule. Some good ideas are:

- A USB drive with photos and videos. These can be of your family and friends, or just of the area where you live!
- Projects you created at school, or homework.
- Drawings.
- Birthday cards from this year.
- A page from the newspaper with important events on it.
- Movie tickets.
- Anything else you think you would want to remember several years in the future!
- Make sure something inside your time capsule has the current date on it.

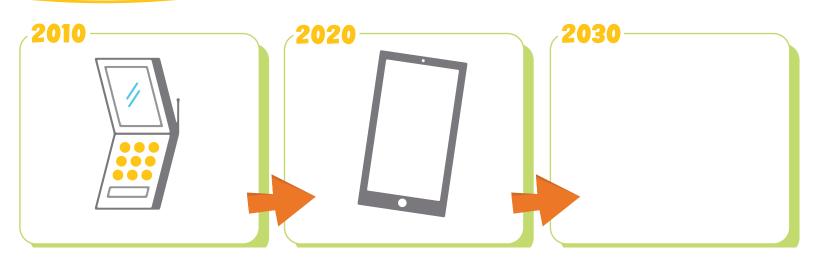
Now for the hard part! Choose a date when you want to open your time capsule (at least a few years in the future!) and be patient! It's going to be hard, but eventually you will forget all about your time capsule, and you'll have a big surprise when you find it at the back of your closet one day!

Another way to preserve memories for the future is to write your future self a letter! Tell yourself things that you think you would want to remember. You can add your age, your height, who your friends are, what kind of games you like to play, and all of your favorite foods and movies and colors. Write about how you are feeling and the best things that happened this year.



Electronics have changed a lot in the past 10 years!

Draw what you think a cell phone will look like in 10 years.

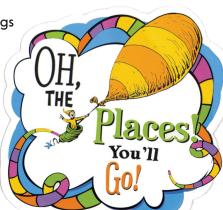


# M<sub>3</sub> C<sub>3</sub> M<sub>3</sub> A<sub>1</sub> T<sub>1</sub> H<sub>4</sub> O<sub>1</sub> M<sub>3</sub> E<sub>1</sub>

Read Oh, the Places You'll Go by Dr. Seuss & pack your bags for your own ADVENTURE!

#### **MATERIALS**:

- Brown paper lunch bags
- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Index cards



#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

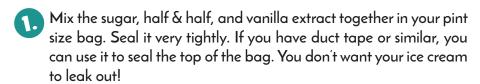
- Fold the paper bag into thirds.
- Create a handle for the bag out of the construction paper. Use the glue stick to attach it to the bag.
- On the inside of the suitcase, attach an index card on each of the three folds. Write "where I'm going," "what I'm bringing," and "why I'll be there" on each of the cards.
- Draw pictures, write explanations, or glue pictures or maps onto each of the index cards.
- Decorate the outside of the suitcase!
- Let this function as a mini vision board for future trips!

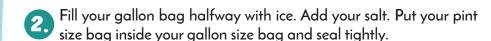


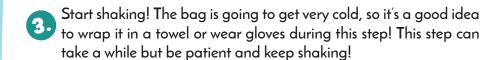
# **MAKE ICE CREAM**

What do you need?

- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 1 cup of half & half
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- ½ cup of course salt (preferably ice cream salt)
- Ice
- Gallon size Ziploc bag
- Pint size Ziploc bag Towel or gloves







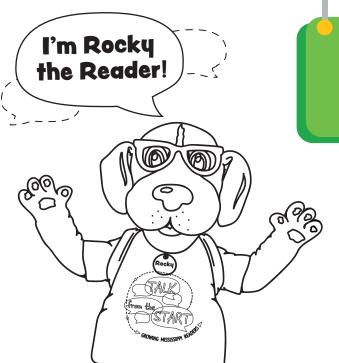
After 5-10 minutes, open the gallon bag and check on your ice cream. It should be getting firm! A tip from Ms. Se'Lah, one of our Visitor Assistants: Press on the palm of your hand just under your thumb. Your ice cream is ready when it starts to feel firm like that!

When your ice cream is done, take your pint size baggie out and quickly run it under cold water to clean off the salt.

6. Open your baggie and enjoy with a spoon!

#### WHY DOES IT WORK?

The freezing point of water is 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Adding salt to ice lowers the freezing point and makes the ice melt. However, the heat that melts the ice must come from somewhere. In this case, the heat is coming from the half & half inside the bag, because even if it feels cold to the touch, it is warmer than the ice! By using the salt to lower the freezing point of the ice, you are creating an environment in which the half & half can freeze at a temperature below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, thus making ice cream! Shaking the bag makes the ice cream freeze evenly, which makes it smooth, and adds air to make it fluffy!



# ROCKY'S GOALS, FOR 2021.

- 1. Read a new book every week.
- 2. Learn a new word every day.
- 3. Share the new word with a friend.
- 4. Travel to new communities and make new friends.
- 5. Help children and grown-ups become better readers.

#### **ROCKY'S TIPS FOR SETTING GOALS**

#### 1. START BRAINSTORMING

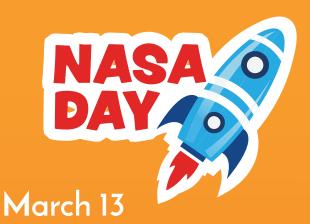
Ask yourself these questions...
 What is important to me? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I want to achieve in life? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. CREATE A PLAN

#### 3. SET GOALS ON YOUR CALENDAR

# JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS!



Count down to NASA Day at MCM with the John C. Stennis Space Center!

At MCM, we love all things space – from rockets to astronauts to space food. On NASA Day, real life astronauts and rocket scientists from Mississippi's very own John C. Stennis Space Center will come to teach guests all about what it's like to go to space, be an astronaut, and work at a space center. Bring your aspiring astronauts to NASA Day on Saturday, March 13 for a special day of activities that will be out of this world!



# February 27

You're invited to join us for a Seuss-inspired fantastic, fun day at MCM for Dr. Seuss' Silly Birthday Celebration!

This is one of MCM's favorite days of the year when guests from across the region visit to celebrate Dr. Seuss. You'll get messy with ooey-gooey oobleck, explore the museum on a Seuss-themed scavenger hunt, create your own Thing 1 or Thing 2 mask, and participate in many more creative activities! Readings of everyone's favorite Dr. Seuss books will be enjoyed throughout the day.



Start your week with fun!

Did you know that MCM is open for special, holiday Mondays from 9am - 5pm for extra hours of inspiration and fun? Magic Monday is the perfect solution to a Monday off from school. Each of these special days includes regular museum programming, as well as a special Food Lab program where guests learn about making delicious and nutritious food and snacks.

Mark your calendar for MCM's upcoming Magic Mondays:
February 15 March 15 April 5



# April 3

Spring is right around the corner, and everyone at MCM is already excited for our annual Bunnies and Butterflies spring event!

Bunnies and Butterflies is the perfect way to welcome the warm, sunny weather of the new season. At this event, guests will learn to plant their own garden, play with real-life bunnies, learn about our insect friends, have faces painted, create unique costumes of bunny ears or butterfly wings, and so much more. This is an event you definitely won't want to miss, so visit us on Saturday, April 3 to help us celebrate spring!

These events are scheduled to take place at MCM in Jackson, MS!



Scan the QR Code to stay up to date with our Spring Events!



#### **MCM** Partners Celebrate the Years!

Since the Mississippi Children's Museum opened in 2010, MCM Partners has served as a steadfast support system through sponsorships, fundraisers, and volunteer hours to help MCM succeed in their mission of inspiring Mississippi's children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential.

Partners have 3 signature fundraising events each year!





**AUGUST** 



THE





**OCTOBER** 

Thank you to our dedicated MCM-Meridian Partners Board Members who've been part of the MCM-Meridian project for years.



#### STANDING

Amanda Cassell, Patty Ann Bogue, Hallie Swindoll Jenn Northam, Helen Sims

#### SITTING

Rhonda Poole, Lou Ann Lamar, Kim Knight Heather Myatt, Susan Coffin

#### NOT PICTURED

Christena Bradley, Lindsey Aull, Beth Whitehead, Linda Grant



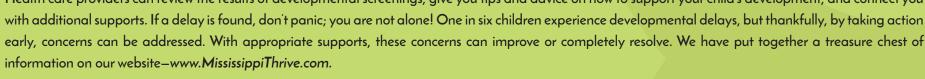
# **✓** MILESTONE CHECKLIST

Children are born with tremendous potential, and what happens in the earliest stages of their lives is so important! During the first five years, young children begin to do so many new things, like engaging in creative, make-believe play; knowing what's real and what's imaginary; and playing with others. These are called developmental milestones, and they usually happen at specific age ranges. As your baby's first teacher, you can use milestone checklists to celebrate your child's accomplishments.

Milestone Checklists are an important part of the pediatric wellness visit and are used to mark your child's development. A developmental screening tool, which is a structured and standardized set of questions, helps providers identify delays. A formal developmental screening is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics at the 9, 18, and 24 or 30 month wellness visit. Don't be afraid to ask your child's health care provider for a developmental screening at these well-child visits or any time you have a concern!

Free milestone checklists and an app are available to download at www.cdc.gov/actearly and www.MississippiThrive.com/resources/.







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# **DID YOU KNOW?**

- More than one million neural connections form every second in a baby's brain!
- Social and emotional skills begin developing in infancy:
  - Got friends?!? Social skills develop through play.
  - Emotional connections are important for a baby's developmental health—talk to your baby, smile at your baby, copy your baby's funny faces!



FAMILIES HELPING
THEIR CHILDREN

THEIR LICEN

#### YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A BRAIN BUILDER!

Vroom® offers ideas so you can help your child thrive by incorporating learning and brain building opportunities into your family's everyday moments. Find out more at www.vroom.org.



# Little Independence (Ages 2-3)

Does your child want to do everything by themselves? Whether it's eating with fingers or trying to use a fork, give them ways to be more independent. Talk to them about what they're doing. If they need, help them a little. When they're done, notice how they respond with a smile or an "I did it!" Celebrate with them!

## Brainy Background

It may take longer and be messier, but you're helping your child to feel good and develop new skills. This will give them a sense they can try something new and succeed.



## Mini Chef (Ages 3-5)

Have your child help with safe and simple tasks while you are cooking. Mixing or adding an ingredient can be good places to start. As you work, ask them what they think will happen when they stir things together or add something new. Listen to their ideas, then talk together about what you see happening.

## **Brainy Background**

This is real-life science. Guessing about what might happen promotes your child's curiosity. This helps them adopt a lifelong love of learning.



### Tiny Tent (Ages 3-5)

Grab a blanket to make a tiny tent at bedtime. Pretend to be camping outside with your child. Say: "Shhhhh...what do you hear? See? Smell? What do you think is happening outside our tent?" Afterward, snap a pic of your child at their campsite!

## **Brainy Background**

Pretending is very important to learning – it helps your child to imagine, be creative, and take the perspective of others. And it's fun!



For more information on developmental milestones and brain building opportunities, visit MississippiThrive.com.



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## LeFleur's Bluff Education and Tourism Complex

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has awarded a \$3,855,000 grant to the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Foundation for the LeFleur's Bluff State Park Education and Tourism Partnership between the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks' (MDWFP) Museum of Natural Science and the Mississippi Children's Museum. This grant will provide essential funds to create a state-of-the-art complex for physical and educational activities through a 21st century playground, outdoor classroom and museum walking trail.

The Mississippi Children's Museum's Director of Development, Emily Hoff, and MDWFP's Museum of Natural Science, Assistant Director, Angel Rohnke helped bring this project to life. This state-of-the-art complex brings a world of possibilities to our community and state. Let's ask Emily and Angel what this project means to them.



What feature are you most excited about in the new complex?

I cannot wait to see the Wee-dra! It's a play structure designed for 6-23 month olds and LeFleur's Bluff will be the first in the world to have it! As the mom of a I year old, I can't wait for my son to experience it! The Hedra Tower, the companion play structure geared toward 5-12 year olds has an 18 foot slide!

The 21st century playground! I am really excited about the modern play equipment that is inclusive to children with accessibility needs. Growing up in New York, I may be most excited about the sail shades for summer playdates. Approximately 75 percent of the playground will be covered and the area below it will be up to 30 degrees cooler than the outdoor temperatures.

What does this partnership mean personally for you and your family?

As a native Jacksonian, I grew up playing in LeFleur's Bluff State Park. I am thrilled that my two children will have positive memories associated with the park as they experience the playground, walk between MCM and MMNS on the new trail and enjoy engaging learning opportunities at the outdoor classroom/pavilion.

As the mom of two boys, I cannot wait to see their excitement over the new playground and fun interactive museum trail. We love to be outdoors and visit fun places like the LeFleur Museum District. This will only add more excitement to our weekend adventures.

#### Why is it important to provide outdoor recreational and educational spaces?

All the structures on the playground promote physical and mental activities - from providing greater freedom to run, jump, and climb to supporting reduced stress levels. The trail has individual exhibits include a fun fact and a lesson about conservation. The outdoor classroom/pavilion will create another opportunity for learning in an inspiring outdoor environment that can also serve the practical need of a covered space for students and families.

Outdoor experiences build visual-spatial skills, strengthen observation and creativity, improve concentration, and enhance motor and imagination skills. Children who play and learn in nature are more physically active, more engaged in learning, and more emotionally healthy.

#### How will this complex impact the future?

Each year, thousands of Mississippians visit our area from around the state. These amenities will attract more families and encourage them to explore and make lifelong memories together. I can't wait to see children enjoying these experiences together! I'm hopeful that this space will encourage families to spend more time outdoors and leave children with an excitement to visit again. The resources this complex will provide will help create a healthier Mississippi, and that's a future we can all benefit from.



# MCM SPRING CALENDAR

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









Ignite the **N**ight



Silly Birthday



















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Magic Monday



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28 Doc McStuffins
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99

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# **MCM-MERIDIAN OPENING SPRING 2021!**









Experience the first children's museum exhibit based on Disney Junior's award-winning series, Doc McStuffins. Join the magical storytelling as you help Doc and her friends in the new McStuffins Toy Hospital! Through imaginative play and hands-on activities, learn life-lessons about wellness. There is so much you can do to take care of you!

Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit is produced by The Children's Museum of Indianapolis and presented by Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health. Disney character live appearances are not part of the exhibit. © Disney





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