



THE MCM PLAYBOOK

SPRING 2024 • VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1

SUMMER
PREVIEW

REACH OUT
AND READ

AFTERSCHOOL
SPOTLIGHT

nickelodeon.



Save the day through hands-on play at the Mississippi Children's Museum's summer exhibit in Jackson, PAW Patrol: Adventure Play, opening May 11, 2024! Based on the hit series, PAW Patrol, this immersive exhibit invites children and families to embark on daring rescue missions and work together to overcome challenges.

Step inside Adventure Bay to meet Marshall, Chase, Skye, and the rest of the Paw Patrol squad as they demonstrate the strength that lies in working together towards a common goal. Together, visitors will discover how teamwork unleashes excellence and the power of collaboration.

The Mississippi Children's Museum understands that two are better than one! That's why guests can add a Dual Membership onto any existing MCM Membership for only \$50! By becoming a Dual Member now, you can enjoy unlimited visits to both locations in Jackson and Meridian and visit our PAW Patrol: Adventure Play exhibit all summer long!

Produced by
**CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM**
INDIANAPOLIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Summer Preview
4	What's New?
5	Reach Out and Read
6	Educational Programs
7	Spring Events
8-9	MCM at Home
10	MCM Partners
11	LeFleur's Bluff Complex
12-13	Afterschool Spotlight
14-15	Donors
16	Calendar



As we welcome the extremely popular traveling exhibit, PAW Patrol: Adventure Play at MCM-Jackson this summer, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible teamwork that defines our museums.

The seamless collaboration between our teams in Jackson and Meridian is nothing short of extraordinary. Just like the spirited pups of PAW Patrol, our teams come together, each contributing their own unique gifts and talents, to create an environment where learning is an adventure. Each job is important and contributes to the whole – a life lesson that we strive to model for the children who play at our museums.

In the plot of PAW Patrol, teamwork is the key to overcoming challenges and achieving goals. Similarly, at the Mississippi Children's Museum, our collective goal is to provide educational opportunities for every child, family, and educator in Mississippi that fosters a community where happy and healthy families can thrive.

The Mississippi Children's Museum is a place where learning and creativity meet to unleash excellence. It is through collaborative passion and valiant effort that makes MCM the beacon of inspiration for inquisitive learners of all ages.

Susan Garrard

Susan Garrard,
Mississippi Children's Museum President/CEO

The MCM Playbook
Spring 2024 Volume 9 Issue 1

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Welcome to the Team!



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SUMMER PREVIEW

ENCHANTED LAND OF STORY

COMING SOON...

A new outdoor garden experience will soon be available at MCM-Jackson. MCM's beloved Gertrude C. Ford Literacy Garden, which opened in 2014, has undergone a full renovation transforming the space into *"The Enchanted Land of Story."*

With an award from the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) and a grant from the Hearst Foundations, MCM has reimagined the space as artist Sherry Norfolk intended in her poem, *"The Enchanted Land of Story,"* that was commissioned to inspire the exhibits.

Visitors will journey through 10 new experiences throughout the 14,000 sq ft garden.





-  **MELODIC FOREST:** Children can "hear the forest sing" as they compose their own musical stories using percussion instruments, exploring the rhythm and power of music.
-  **DRAGON'S LAIR MURAL:** Visitors can transport themselves into a "dragon's lair," where they can write poetry and engage with larger-than-life talk tubes to share stories with friends and family.
-  **CYPRESS FOREST OBSTACLE COURSE:** Moments of movement and exploration are encouraged through a balance beam obstacle course weaving through the cypress forest and spinning chairs that take children through a "topsy-turvy world."
-  **MAGICAL WATER FEATURE:** A magical water feature invites children to run between secret portals, "play in dancing waters," and splash in a giant rain puddle.

Exhibit signs illustrated by MCM's Senior Graphic Designer, Lori Nesbitt, will feature dragons playing through the garden which will guide visitors to each activity, ending with a chance to perform in the amphitheater and "tell of what they did while there."

Get ready to explore our new enchanted space in Spring 2024!



STAY COOL THIS SUMMER AT MCM - JACKSON'S SPLASH PAD, OPENING SATURDAY, MAY 11TH!



DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS FOR MCM - JACKSON'S SUMMER EXHIBIT, PAW PATROL: ADVENTURE PLAY
June 22nd | July 13th | August 24th

SUMMER CAMPS

MCM's Summer Camps are the perfect way to keep your little one engaged and learning throughout the summer months. Our camps offer age-appropriate activities designed to stimulate the academic, creative, and social growth of your child. Through exploratory activities and museum play, your child can dive into their imagination, develop their science and engineering skills, improve their social and communication skills, and enhance their physical health. Our qualified and supportive staff ensures that every child has a fun and memorable camp experience. Don't let the summer slide take over your child's learning! Make plans to register for our upcoming Summer Camps.



MCM - MERIDIAN GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

Discover the joy of gardening at MCM-Meridian's Know to Grow program! Regularly, guests can get hands-on in the museum's Enchanted Garden, planting seeds, exploring their senses, or even tasting fresh produce. Last summer, two program attendees had the opportunity to help, Master Gardener, Angela Barnard, plant pimento pepper seeds during the Know to Grow program. Two months later they returned to help harvest and enjoy the same produce they planted!

MCM - MERIDIAN TO HOST 4TH ANNUAL HAPPY HEALTHY FAMILIES

This summer, MCM-Meridian will host its 4th Annual Happy Healthy Families program series! This four-part family program aims to empower participating caregivers and children to make healthy choices by providing them with the tools, skills, and resources needed to put them on a path toward lifelong wellness. Families enjoy dinner and themed programming focused on social and emotional wellness, nutrition, and physical health, with literacy foundational to each program. At the conclusion of the program, families receive a complementary museum membership to keep the fun going all year long!



WHAT'S NEW?



CATER'S AT THE MUSEUM

M₃ E₁ R₁ I₁ D₂ I₁ A₁ N₁



The Mississippi Children's Museum-Meridian is excited to announce the newest addition to its eight-acre campus: Cater's at the Museum! In the Fall of 2023, MCM-Meridian developed a partnership with Cater's Market, a locally owned restaurant and café, to bring you one-of-a-kind culinary experiences just steps away from the museum. The new restaurant offers healthy and convenient food options, including salads, soups, sandwiches, wraps, coffee, and more.

Jamie Cater, owner of Cater's Market, opened her first restaurant location in the North Hills District of Meridian in 2006 and her second location in downtown Starkville in 2020. Seeing the growth and revitalization of Sela Ward Parkway and the Downtown Meridian area, the partnership between MCM-Meridian and Cater's Market formed through a shared vision of bringing high-quality grab-and-go food services to the area for museum guests, locals, and travelers.



WATER TABLE IN MCM - JACKSON

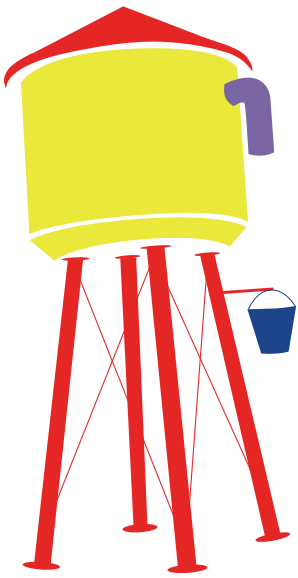
A new way for water play! MCM's new water table was installed this fall and thousands of guests have already enjoyed the enhanced experiences in the Exploring Mississippi gallery.

MCM's iconic water tower that includes a three-dimensional catfish and live-action guitar was refurbished and returned to its original place of prominence along with over 20 new interactive experiences. Children can create a boat race obstacle course, visit a crane port and boat dock to load cargo, interact with two rain clouds, and get a hands-on hydraulics lesson watching balls spin down through the water vortex. Children can fish for catfish and a duo of water guns allows guests to create their own symphony with chimes. The Launch into Learning afterschool students take turns each afternoon enjoying the space and testing the features to make sure they are in prime working condition. The most popular feature is the fog mushroom, which lets children learn about phases of the water cycle as they observe the fog cloud grow and then disappear!

This exhibit is made possible thanks to funding from the Luckyday Foundation. Jamie Houston, Chairman of the Luckyday Foundation stated, "Some years ago, the Foundation assisted with the installation of the Mississippi climbing map in memory of our donor Frank Rogers Day and in recognition of his great affection for the state of Mississippi and its residents. The Foundation is pleased to enhance this educational exhibit with the addition of the new water table for our children to experience and enjoy."



Luckyday Foundation Board of Directors: Granville Tate, Pat Smith, Mary Preston Dubberly, & Jamie Houston



CELEBRATIONS EXHIBIT

The Mississippi Children's Museum is pleased to be a host museum for Celebrations, a modular exhibit from the Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series, created to help children learn about and better understand Asian cultures. MCM is one of only a handful of children's museums across the country to host and travel the exhibit made possible by the Association of Children's Museums and the Freeman Foundation.

Over the past few months, guests at both MCM-Jackson and MCM-Meridian have been able to learn about the Lunar New Year Celebrations in China, South Korea, and Vietnam. Celebrations is designed to bring children and families together to explore New Year celebrations through the imagery of fireworks, lanterns, lotuses, and kites. Children can participate in activities such as drumming and storytelling. From telling the Nian Monster story in a small theater to discovering different dishes served for breakfast as an eye spy game, children will be captivated by the rich history, beauty, and fun of these Asian New Year festivals.

The Celebrations exhibit fosters cultural understanding and provides children and families a way to learn about and enjoy Asian cultural experiences without leaving Mississippi. Each exhibit component is translated into Spanish, the second most common language in the U.S.

Celebrations is the latest addition to MCM Travels, our collection of hands-on traveling exhibits available for rent statewide. If you are interested in hosting the exhibit in your community, request a booking for MCM Travels online at mcm.ms or email programs@mcm.ms.

Over the past 20 years, the Freeman Foundation has majorly invested in developing a greater appreciation of Asian cultures and histories in the United States in partnership with the Association of Children's Museums. By visiting Celebrations at MCM in Jackson and Meridian, this learning opportunity will become part of a child's long-term memory, creating a more in-depth experience, openness, and comprehension of Asian culture.



ROCKY'S BIRTHDAY CLUB IN MCM - JACKSON

MCM Members can now sign up for Rocky's Birthday Club for an extra fun surprise during their birthday month! By joining Rocky's Birthday Club, you'll receive a birthday shoutout on social media and get to enjoy a special treat or activity at the museum on the last Saturday of your birthday month.

SIGN UP:



TALK FROM THE START AND REACH OUT AND READ PARTNER TOGETHER TO GROW MISSISSIPPI READERS

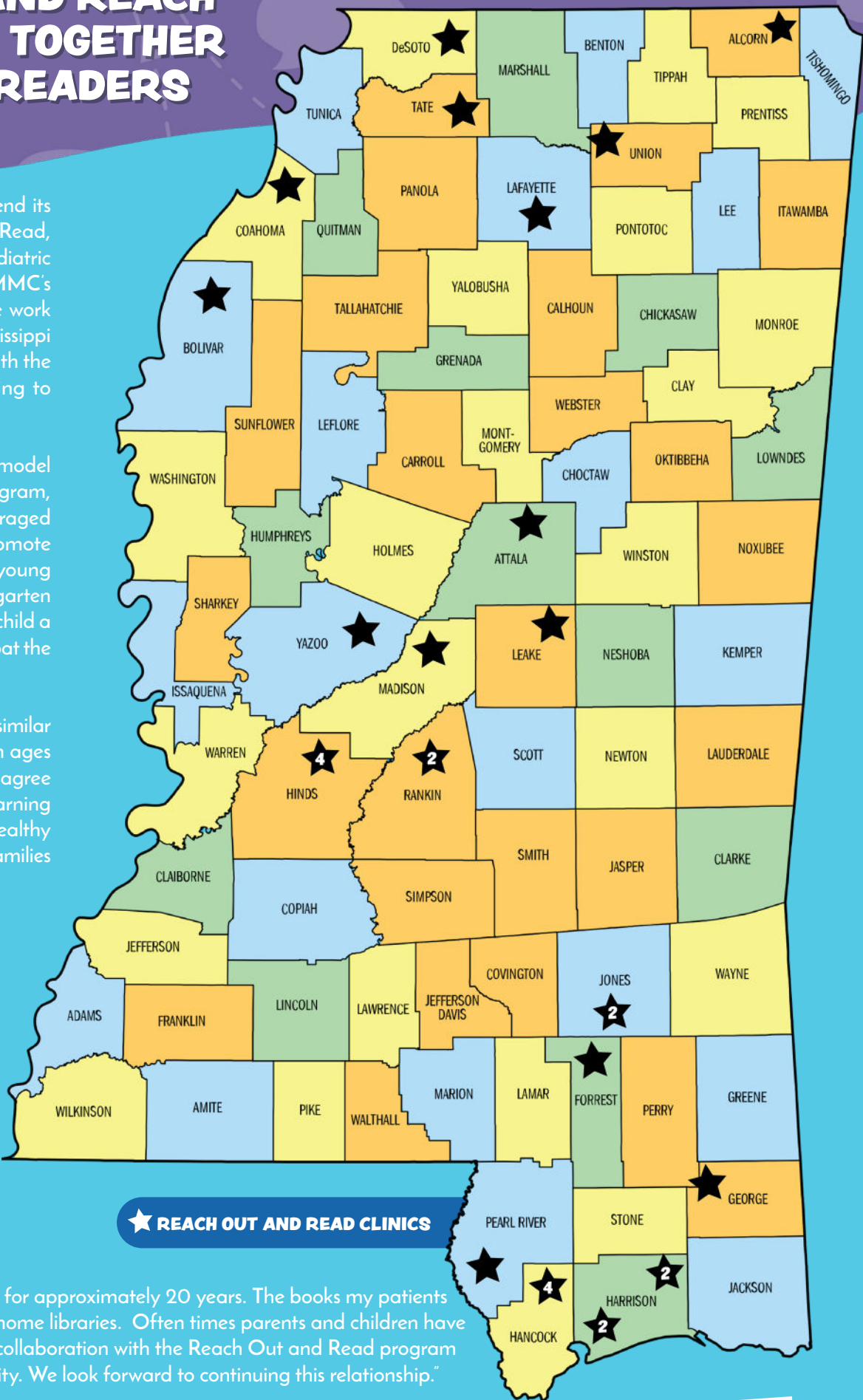
The Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) is excited to extend its work in early childhood development with Reach Out and Read, University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), and its pediatric arm, Children’s of Mississippi. MCM, in partnership with UMMC’s Center for Advancement of Youth (CAY), is continuing the work initiated by Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI), CAY, and Mississippi Thrive! MCM looks forward to strengthening relationships with the 30 existing pediatric clinics in the program and expanding to additional clinics statewide.

Reach Out and Read is the nation’s only pediatric literacy model endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. In the program, families of all backgrounds and economic means are encouraged to read with their young children using strategies that promote parent-child bonding and connection. About one-third of young children, and half of children living in poverty, arrive at kindergarten without the skills they need to do well in school. Giving every child a foundation for success strengthens our society and helps combat the effects of income inequality.

MCM’s literacy initiative, Talk from the Start (TFTS), shares a similar mission of influencing early childhood development between ages birth to five years old. Both TFTS and Reach Out and Read agree engaging in language-rich activities from birth improves learning and language development. Reading together promotes healthy brain development, furthers language acquisition, and helps families build meaningful bonds.

BRING ROCKY’S HOUSE OR ROCKY THE READER TO YOUR COMMUNITY!

Scan the QR code to learn more and book today!



CLINIC SPOTLIGHT

“It has been an honor to be a Reach Out and Read provider for approximately 20 years. The books my patients have received on occasion were the first books to build their home libraries. Often times parents and children have grown to expect to receive a book at their wellness visit. The collaboration with the Reach Out and Read program has propelled the clinic’s platform of educating our community. We look forward to continuing this relationship.”

Michelle Gibson, MD
Kidz Care Clinic, Jackson, MS

“The hard cover, colorful books from Reach Out and Read have been a staple at all our Sunshine Children’s clinics for the last 20 years! Our little patients run to the book rack after their checkups and shots and their faces light up when they pick out their favorite book to take home! All the pain from the Doctor’s visit seems to fade away in this joy of getting a beautiful book. Our patients prefer to get a book over a piece of candy any day and love to tell us the story of the book they got at their next visit! We hope the steady supply of these wonderful book gifts will keep coming to Sunshine!”

Vibha Vig, MD Pediatrics
Sunshine Children’s Clinics: Canton, Carthage, and Yazoo City

“I feel Reach Out and Read is a wonderful tool to expose children to a love of reading and positive interaction with books. As a pediatrician, part of my job includes counseling parents on the importance of social interaction and placing an emphasis on reading to their children. Reach Out and Read gives children an opportunity to be read to at a time they would normally be in front of a phone or television. I’m excited about the opportunities that Reach Out and Read will offer to our patients.”

Dr. William Robert Justice, MD
Baptist Anderson Regional Medical Center



MCM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

THE LIFT: EMPOWERING EDUCATORS THROUGH STEAM EDUCATION

The Mississippi Children’s Museum’s educational arm, The LIFT, has embarked on an enriching journey with pre-K teachers from Jackson and Meridian to help advance Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education in the classroom. The first session was held at MCM-Jackson with an inspiring group of ten educators eager to learn new skills and implement them into the classroom.

The focal point of this inaugural session was MCM’s innovative “Teaching STEAM Through Literacy” professional development program. The participating teachers were immersed in a hands-on learning experience that included engaging STEAM activities, coding and robotics exploration, and a curated selection of captivating children’s books designed to seamlessly integrate STEAM concepts into literacy.

One of the highlights of the program was the distribution of personalized STEAM kits created by Central Creativity. These comprehensive kits include meticulously crafted lesson plans, cutting-edge robotics components, and all the necessary supplies to conduct interactive experiments with their students. The intention behind these kits is to empower teachers with the tools they need to make STEAM education an exciting and accessible experience for their classrooms.

MCM is eager to reconnect with these enthusiastic educators this spring, building on the foundations laid during the initial session and fostering a community of educators committed to delivering exceptional STEAM education.

This initiative, generously supported through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, exemplifies the Mississippi Children’s Museum’s commitment to being a catalyst for positive change in education, working hand-in-hand with teachers to create impactful learning experiences for the next generation.



CS WONDER PROVIDES DYNAMIC TRAINING FOR MISSISSIPPI TEACHERS

Over the past two years, the Computer Science (CS) Wonder initiative, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, has collaborated with 20 teachers from across Mississippi. In partnership with Mississippi State University’s Cyber Education department, CS Wonder has provided specialized training and support to 4th-grade teachers, which has enabled them to integrate coding and robotics into their classrooms. As part of this program, each teacher has been equipped with VEX robots and a curated selection of books tailored to enhance their coding and robotics curriculum.

The culmination of these efforts is the upcoming Spring Coding Competition, where students will showcase the skills they’ve acquired under the guidance of their teachers. This initiative not only aims to instill valuable coding skills, but also fosters an environment of 21st-century learning.

MCM NURTURES ASPIRING GRANDMASTERS

In the wise words of skilled chess player and prolific chess author, Irving Chernev, “Every chess master was once a beginner.” MCM embraces this philosophy wholeheartedly, recognizing that chess is not just a game; it’s a powerful tool that brings people together while fostering essential skills.

At MCM, chess is viewed as more than a strategic board game; it’s an educational instrument that contributes to problem-solving skills, brain development, enhanced concentration, improved memory, and a host of other cognitive benefits. With a commitment to creating a space where novices can evolve into masters and where seasoned players continually refine their skills, MCM is proud to partner with the Mississippi Scholastic Chess Association to host regular chess tournaments.

These tournaments provide a platform for beginners to embark on their chess journey, learning and growing with each move. Simultaneously, seasoned players have the opportunity to challenge themselves, refine strategies, and continue their quest for mastery. Whether you’re a novice ready to make your first move or a seasoned grandmaster seeking the next challenge, MCM invites you to join us on our next chess adventure.

UPCOMING DATES
MCM - JACKSON: 3/15
MCM - MERIDIAN: 4/27

Visit our website for more info!



JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS IN JACKSON AND MERIDIAN



March 9

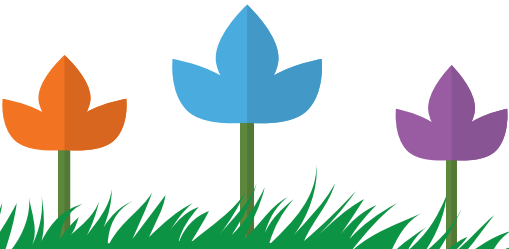
Explore the final frontier at Nasa Day! At MCM we love all things space - from rockets to astronauts to space food. On NASA Day, guests will learn about what it's like to go to space and be an astronaut. Bring your aspiring space adventurers to NASA Day for a day of science fact, science fiction, and out-of-this-world science fun!



March 30

Spring is right around the corner and we are fluttering with excitement for our annual Bunnies and Butterflies event!

Bunnies and Butterflies is the perfect way to welcome the warm, sunny weather of the new season. At this event, guests will enjoy gardening activities, interact with live bunnies, learn about our tiny insect friends, create a pair of bunny ears or butterfly wings, and so much more. Visit both MCM-Jackson and MCM-Meridian to help us celebrate spring!



February 24

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

Known as one of our guests' favorite events of the year, we look forward to welcoming visitors from all across the region to celebrate the beloved author, Dr. Seuss. You'll get messy with ooey-goopy oobleck, search for clues on a Seuss-tastical scavenger hunt, and enjoy a special treat during a Seuss-themed Food Lab program. Readings of Dr. Seuss' most popular books will be enjoyed throughout the day, and guests can snap their photo with Thing 1, Thing 2, and of course - The Cat in the Hat!



March 11-15

Visit MCM-Jackson and MCM-Meridian for a Week of Wonder during Spring Break, March 11-15! We have a WONDER-ful week of STEAM themed special programming and activities for you to enjoy.

Each day we will focus on a subject in STEAM: Monday is Science, Tuesday is Technology, Wednesday is Engineering, Thursday is Art, and Friday is Math.

Week of Wonder at MCM-Jackson is in partnership with the LeFleur Museum District, where activities will take place at four unique museums: MS Sports Hall of Fame, MS Agriculture & Forestry Museum, Mississippi Children's Museum, and MDWFP's Museum of Natural Science. Week of Wonder at MCM-Meridian is in partnership with Meridian Main Street's STEAM Break.



May 4

Put your superhero skills to the test at MCM's third annual SUPER-lympics on Saturday, May 4!

Step inside MCM's SUPER-lympic Village for a competition consisting of a series of challenging, hands-on games promoting both physical and mental health! The day will kick off with our Opening Ceremony, followed by MCM's SUPER-lympic Games, where children will focus on three priorities: physical activity, healthy eating, and social/emotional health.

**OUR THEME FOR THIS PLAYBOOK IS ALL ABOUT TEAMWORK!
GRAB A FEW FRIENDS, SIBLINGS, OR YOUR GROWNUP TO DO THE ACTIVITIES BELOW!**

LET'S GO SAILING

MATERIALS:

- Large towel (bath or beach towel)
- Painter's tape OR something to make start and end points

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Grab your friends and divide into groups of no more than four people. If you have a small group, everyone can play together on one towel!
2. Choose your starting line and your finish line on opposite sides of the room. Mark these with painter's tape or designate pieces of furniture to be the start and end points.
3. Have your group line up behind the starting line. Give them the large towel.
4. The goal is to get from the starting line to the finish line as quickly as possible without letting your feet leave the towel.
5. If anyone's foot touches the floor, the team must start over.
6. They can use any technique they can think of.
7. Use a stopwatch to time each team. The team that accomplishes this task the fastest wins.
8. To make the game harder, try again but don't let ANY body part touch the floor.

What examples of teamwork did you see during this game? Were there any techniques that surprised you? Do you think your team worked well together?



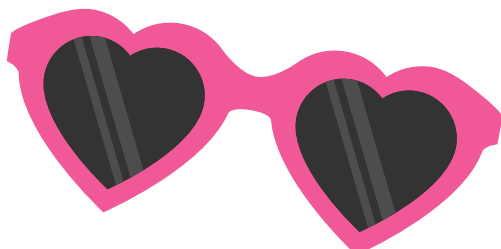
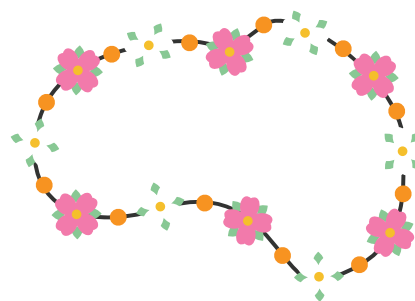
DETECTIVES

MATERIALS:

- Accessories to change appearances (stickers, ponytail holders, costumes, etc.)

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Get your group all together in the room and take a moment to look at one another. What do you notice about each other's appearance? What color shirt is everyone wearing? Is everyone wearing a jacket?
2. Assign one person to be the detective.
3. The detective leaves the room, and everyone left behind chooses one thing to change about their appearance. This can be as obvious or as subtle as they want.
 - a. They can pull their hair up or let it down, put on a jacket or take one off, put a sticker on, put their shoes on the opposite feet, etc.
4. The detective reenters the room and tries to identify as many changes as they can.
 - a. To make it even more challenging, give the detective a time limit.





TOILET PAPER ROLL SEED STARTER

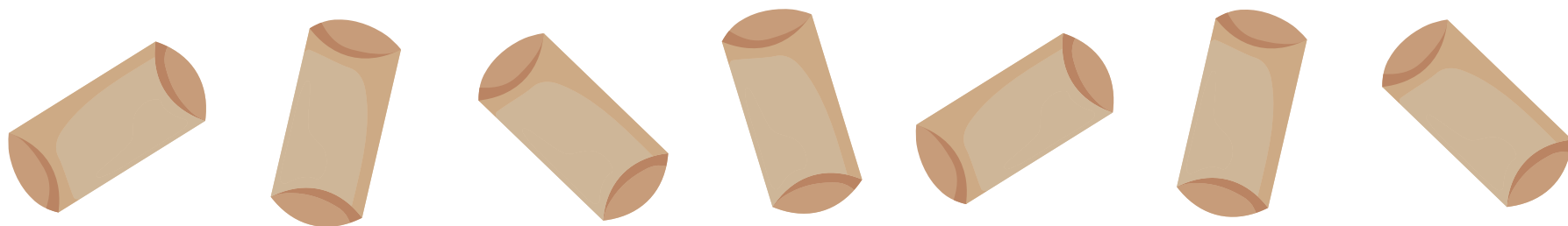
MATERIALS:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Scissors
- Seeds
- Soil
- Water

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Start with an empty toilet paper roll. Use the scissors to carefully cut the roll in half.
2. Decide which end of the roll will be the bottom of your pot. Cut two half inch slits across from one another on the bottom of the roll.
3. Then cut another two slits in the center of each of the halves you just made. The bottom of your toilet paper roll should have four cuts equal distance from one another.
4. Fold the first section of the toilet paper roll in toward the center.
5. Fold the second section in over the first.
6. Continue folding the sections into the center until you have a flat bottom.
7. Fill your pot with soil and plant your seeds!

Toilet paper rolls are biodegradable, so by using these to start seeds in the spring, you are also helping our planet by recycling!



WHEELBARROW WALK

MATERIALS:

- Jigsaw puzzle

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Start by putting the jigsaw puzzle pieces on one side of the room, and the empty puzzle base on the other.
2. Grab a partner. Decide who will be the wheelbarrow.
3. The wheelbarrow starts in a push-up position, and the standing partner will lift the wheelbarrow's legs, so their weight is entirely on their hands.
4. The wheelbarrow walk is a great upper extremity strengthening activity. It can be made easier or harder depending on where the legs are held:
 - a. Holding higher on the legs makes it easier because the standing partner is taking some weight off of the wheelbarrow's arms.
 - b. Holding at the ankles is the hardest because it puts more weight on the wheelbarrow's arms.
5. Work together to gather the pieces and wheelbarrow walk them from one side of the room to the other.
6. This can be done as a single team challenge or as a race against another duo.



MCM Partners

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP!

AMANDA P. OVERBY
MCM-JACKSON PARTNERS PRESIDENT



PATTY ANN BOGUE
MCM-MERIDIAN PARTNERS PRESIDENT



IGNITE THE NIGHT

MCM-Jackson Partners' fundraising event, Ignite the Night 2024, celebrates the Lunar New Year on Saturday, February 10. Guests are invited to join us in a grand Lunar New year celebration as we usher in the "Year of the Dragon." Enter the mouth of the dragon and enjoy the vibrant décor of the season along with some true culinary delicacies. See what luck this new year will bring as you cast your bids in our silent auction, then dance the night away with some mystical, magical guests. Here is to a very happy and healthy Year of the Dragon!



LOVE BUG BOOGIE

On Friday, February 9th, love and music will fill the air for MCM-Meridian Partners' inaugural Love Bug Boogie fundraiser! This family-friendly Valentine's dance will soon become your favorite heart-day tradition. Get ready to indulge your sweet tooth with delectable treats, groove along to music, make lovable crafts, and more. Bring your little love bugs and prepare to create the sweetest memories!



A VERY MERRY NIGHT

A Very Merry Night is MCM Partners' family fundraiser that serves as the premiere holiday event of the year by taking place on the opening night of MCM's popular holiday exhibit, Journey to the North Pole in Jackson! This magical evening gives families early access to photos with Santa, while also continuing to celebrate children's literature and the fascinating world of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) through fun and interactive holiday-themed programming. This year's event raised over **\$100,000** to support the museum's mission.



MERRY AT THE MUSEUM

MCM-Meridian's first-ever Merry at the Museum fundraiser was a huge success! Guests experienced a night of nostalgic holiday magic with live music, specialty cocktails, hearty bites, photos with Santa, a silent auction, and more, all for the benefit of the museum. Through the support of our generous sponsors, hosts, Partners planning committee, and guests, we raised a total of **\$115,000** to underwrite the mission and vision of the museum. We are incredibly grateful to all who contributed to our inaugural signature holiday fundraiser!



MINGLE AT THE MUSEUM
IN MCM - MERIDIAN
JUNE 6, 2024
presented by Citizens National Bank



Save the Dates



NEON NIGHT
IN MCM - JACKSON
JULY 20, 2024

LEFLEUR'S BLUFF COMPLEX

100 MAGNOLIAS

The LeFleur's Bluff Complex (LCB) is now home to over 100 Magnolias of various shapes, sizes, and varieties! Sweetbay, Saucer, Star, and several Southern Magnolia species now adorn the complex's gateway entrance and along the picturesque Spotter's Adventure Trail. The trail connects MDWFP's Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, the Mississippi Children's Museum, and the LeFleur's Bluff Playground, so guests can safely and conveniently visit both museums and the playground.

The planting of 100 Magnolias at the LBC is not only about landscaping; it symbolizes the deep roots of this project in the heart of Mississippi. It is a heartfelt gesture that expresses our unwavering hospitality and gratitude to all who come to experience this remarkable site.

As an investor in Mississippi's workforce development, this project utilized local businesses to carry out these recent additions, including a striking metal mural at The Den, designed by Wier Boerner Allin Architecture, and installed by Mitchell Signs. Other enhancements include new landscaping by Christian Preus Landscape Architecture, and decorative park benches alongside the trail.

In addition to these exciting recent enhancements, the highly anticipated joint entrance is also set to debut this summer! The upcoming joint entrance, constructed by Alliant Construction, boasts prime visibility from the bustling I-55, making it effortlessly recognizable for both regular patrons and first-time visitors. Its eye-catching design, coupled with advanced signage and landscaping, ensures a striking presence and welcome to popular attractions hosted at the LeFleur's Bluff Complex. Serving as a central access point, the entrance streamlines navigation and enhances accessibility for guests attending events or exploring various facilities.

The LeFleur's Bluff Complex is a popular attraction for visitors and locals, alike. Since the playground opened in December of 2021, the LBC has seen over 700,000 visitors. This project has had tremendous economic and tourism benefits for the entire region and will continue to for years to come!



SCAVENGER HUNT ALONG SPOTTER'S ADVENTURE TRAIL

Can you spot the animals and their tracks? Visitors to Spotter's Adventure Trail can find a new sidewalk scavenger hunt engraved along the pathway between MCM and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. While enjoying a stroll along the trail, visitors will be prompted to identify animal tracks, match rhyming words, and practice their ABC's and 123's, along with learning American Sign Language.



Made possible by  MISSISSIPPI Foundation



LAUNCH INTO LEARNING AT MCM-JACKSON

The Mississippi Children's Museum - Jackson takes pride in offering a valuable after-school program, Launch into Learning, addressing the community's need for safe and educational learning spaces. Aimed at children in grades PreK4 to 5th grade, this initiative is a testament to MCM's commitment to fostering a love for learning in young minds.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, MCM's after-school program serves 101 students from McWillie Elementary, Obama Magnet, and Wells APAC in the Jackson Public School District. The program provides a safe environment and engages students in a diverse range of educational activities.

Participating students dive into enriching programming with concentrations in literacy, STEAM, gardening, architecture, art, chess, and golf. Beyond academics, students enjoy free time to play in the museum and the LeFleur's Bluff Playground. Snack and dedicated homework time are also part of the program, ensuring a balanced and supportive learning experience.

The program places a strong emphasis on social-emotional well-being, incorporating a weekly character lesson. Recognizing and incentivizing positive behavior, the program awards the "Group of the Week" to the best-performing group each week, fostering a sense of camaraderie and encouraging active participation.

Since inception of the program in 2020, MCM's after-school program has provided more than a service to the community; it provides a comprehensive educational experience, addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of participating students. MCM continues to be a cornerstone in the community, providing a nurturing space for children to thrive.

LAUNCH INTO LEARNING AT MCM-MERIDIAN

The Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian has established a Launch into Learning afterschool program for children in East Mississippi. The program is in its first year and serves 30 students from Crestwood Elementary School in the Meridian Public School District (MPSD).

Modeled after MCM-Jackson's Launch into Learning program, MCM-Meridian takes a comprehensive approach to their program, nurturing young minds through a variety of engaging activities and programs.

Students are involved in daily programming, including Tech Tuesday, Wonder Wednesday, Know to Grow on Thursdays, and Artful Fridays, as well as incorporating multiple literacy and math sessions as part of the weekly rotation. This unique blend ensures a well-rounded educational experience, complemented by exploration within the museum.

The program doesn't stop at academics; it prioritizes social and emotional development through sessions aligned with the school's Leader in Me program. A daily snack and drink are also provided, ensuring that students have the sustenance they need for both physical and mental engagement.

The program recently hosted a Lights on Afterschool event, which included program highlights, a student STEAM gallery to display their work, and a complimentary meal for the students and their family. In spring of 2024, MCM-Meridian will host a Family Math Night, which will offer both a meal and math fluency activities, along with materials for each participating family. Results from a parent satisfaction survey conducted by NSPARC indicate that the Launch into Learning program has had a positive impact on participating students. Parents have reported that their children have shown increased interest in learning new things, greater motivation at school, and improved behavior.

The Launch into Learning program at the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian is more than just an afterschool service; it is a commitment to nurturing a love for learning and fostering holistic development in every child it serves.





**LIAM PHILIPP - 4TH GRADE
WELLS APAC**

"The Art Activities are my favorite part about afterschool. I look forward to seeing my friends and the free play activities. I have learned at afterschool there is always hope."



**JACK PARKINSON - 3RD GRADE
MCWILLIE ELEMENTARY**

"My favorite part about afterschool is relaxing in the treehouse in the health gallery. I look forward to seeing my friends and counselors. I have learned how the water cycle works."



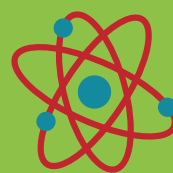
**KYLEE SANDIFER - 5TH GRADE
OBAMA MAGNET**

"My favorite part of afterschool is getting to see my friends and counselors. I look forward to playing and learning new things. I have learned a lot about Architecture and construction."



**CADEN - 4TH GRADE
CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY**

"My favorite program is Artful Friday. I look forward to playing outside in the garden. In Know to Grow, I learned about plants...they start with a seed then grow roots."



**BLAKE AND GREY - 2ND GRADE
CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY**

"My favorite thing about afterschool is playing in Wings of Wonder...I can fly the airplane! I look forward to Artful Friday. We get to paint and create in Artful Friday." -Blake

"My favorite thing about afterschool is Good Night Moon and the train. I look forward to the days that we can play in the museum. I have learned about painting." -Grey

**CADEN - 4TH GRADE
CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY**

"My favorite program is Artful Friday. I look forward to playing outside in the garden. In Know to Grow, I learned about plants...they start with a seed then grow roots."



**EMMALYNN - 1ST GRADE
CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY**

"My favorite part of afterschool is Tech Tuesday. I look forward to drawing. I've learned when I'm in the garden with Mrs. Angela that plants need water and sun to grow!"



MCM STATEWIDE DONORS

THANK YOU DONORS!

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JUNE 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2023

* denotes an in-kind donation

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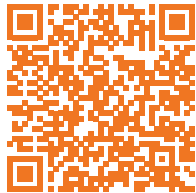
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MCM - JACKSON'S SPRING CALENDAR

MCM - MERIDIAN'S SPRING CALENDAR

Please note that these dates and events take place in Jackson, MS.

Please note that these dates and events take place in Meridian, MS.

FEB

10

Ignite the Night
Adults Only Event

13-18

Member
Appreciation
Week

19

MAGIC MONDAY

24

Dr. Seuss
Silly Birthday
Celebration!

MAR

9

NASA DAY

11

MAGIC MONDAY

11-15

week of
WONDER

30

Bunnies &
Butterflies

APR

1

MAGIC MONDAY

MAY

4

SUPER LYMPICS

10

Members
Preview Party:
PAW Patrol

11

PAW Patrol
Exhibit Opens!

11

Splash Pad
Opens

JUNE

15

Juneteenth
Celebration

22

PAW Patrol
Special Event

29

Patriotic
Day

JULY

13

PAW Patrol
Special Event

20

Neon Night
Adults Only Event

25

Christmas
in July

27

HARRY
POTTER'S
BIRTHDAY

9

Love Bug
Boogie

13-18

Member
Appreciation
Week

19

MAGIC MONDAY

24

Dr. Seuss
Silly Birthday
Celebration!

9

NASA DAY

11

MAGIC MONDAY

11-15

week of
WONDER

30

Bunnies &
Butterflies

1

MAGIC MONDAY

13

Military
Appreciation
Day

4

SUPER LYMPICS

CHess TOURNAMENTS
MCM - JACKSON: 3/15
MCM - MERIDIAN: 4/27
See page 6 for more information.

6

Mingle at the Museum
Adults Only Event

15

Juneteenth
Celebration

29

Patriotic
Day

27

HARRY
POTTER'S
BIRTHDAY