



Building Bridges

Empathetic Listening, Appreciative Inquiry, and
Community Inclusion as Authentic Community
Engagement Work

Adrienne, Eric, Melissa, Robby, Tim, Veronika

Agenda

Welcome-Introductions

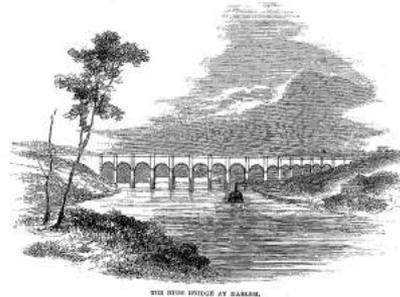
Experiential introduction of session topics

- Empathetic Listening
- Appreciative Inquiry

Community Inclusion Examples

- Thinkery
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science
- Museum of Life and Science
- Science Museum of Minnesota
- Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

Table Conversations



Empathetic Listening



Active listening or reflective - a way of listening and responding to another person that **improves mutual understanding and trust**. [I]t enables the listener to **receive**, accurately **interpret** the speaker's message, and appropriate **respond**.

- builds trust and respect
- enables the disputants to release their emotions - reduces tensions,
- encourages the surfacing of information, and
- creates a safe environment that is conducive to collaborative problem solving

Paying attention to another person with empathy [emotional identification, compassion, feeling, insight].

- **seek to understand, before being understood**
- connect emotionally with another person while simultaneously attempting to connect cognitively.

Practice: Empathetic Listening

1. Turn to your neighbors: create a group of 3
2. Choose roles: Speaker, Listener, Responder
3. Speaker - talk for 1 minute
4. Listener - I heard you say...
5. Responder - I wonder...
6. Switch



Appreciative Inquiry



“At its heart, AI is about the **search for the best in people**, their organizations, and the strengths-filled, opportunity-rich world around them. AI is not so much a shift in the methods and models of organizational change, but AI is a fundamental **shift in the overall perspective** taken throughout the entire change process to ‘**see**’ the wholeness of the human system and to ‘**inquire**’ into that system’s strengths, possibilities, and successes. ”

– Excerpt from: Stavros, Jacqueline, Godwin, Lindsey, & Cooperrider, David. (2015). *Appreciative Inquiry: Organization Development and the Strengths Revolution*. In *Practicing Organization Development: A guide to leading change and transformation (4th Edition)*, William Rothwell, Roland Sullivan, and Jacqueline Stavros (Eds). Wiley

Practice: Appreciative Inquiry



1. Mix it up: Pair up with someone you don't know
2. Conduct the interview
3. Take brief notes
4. Practice empathetic listening, allow for silence
5. You will each have 4 minutes for each interview

From: Libraries Transforming Communities: Community Conversation Workbook

Community Inclusion is...



De-centralizing our expertise

Relationship focused

Invitation and engagement

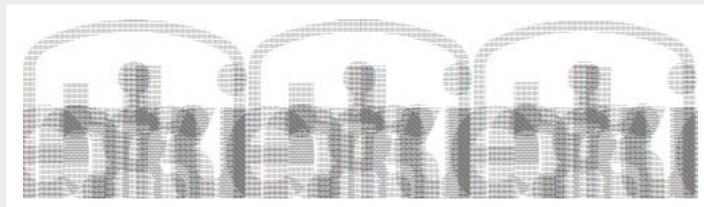
Generative

Co-creation

A couple sources for thinking about museum inclusion:

<https://inluseum.com/>

<https://empatheticmuseum.tumblr.com/>



Community Night Spotlights



Adrienne Barnett
Associate Director of Programs
Austin, TX





Sensory Friendly Hours Challenges → Spotlights

KEY VALUES

Inclusive
Innovation

Playfulness
Cooperation
Creativity

Respect
Excellence

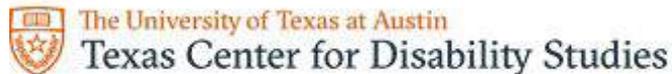
COMMUNITY MEETING: ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Financial constraints

Build empathy

Social Inclusion

Transportation





Community Night Spotlights

"Thinkery strives to be an inclusive, friendly, inspiring space to learn for the entire community, regardless of financial status, mental/physical abilities, ethnicity, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender expression/identity or family status."

- Wednesdays, 4-8pm
- Admission by donation, with a suggested \$1 dollar donation
- Potential monthly topics



Austin Flamenco Academy



Lehman High School Mariachi

| Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| LGBTQ Family Pride Night | Hispanic Heritage | Disabilities Awareness | Native American Heritage | | | African American Awareness | Women in STEAM | Autism Awareness | Foster Care & Adoption Awareness | Asian American Heritage | Refugee Awareness |



Community Night Spotlights

Key Features

- Community Partners (2-10)
 - Partners in planning
 - Hands-on activities
 - Resource tables
 - Assist with marketing
- Thinkery-led activities (2-3)
 - Hands-on activities
 - Storytime (1 bilingual)



Ana Camelo Jackson author of
Stripes for Eliana



Camp in Motion



University of Texas Student
Academy of Audiology



Community Night Spotlights

Challenges

- Marketing
- Time! - for partner engagement
- Participation barriers
- Opposing views
 - Internal & external

"We went to your facilities for entertainment and learning, not for social engineering. Please rethink your decisions."

"Rather than putting a spotlight on one part of our society, the Thinkery needs to be inclusive of all children and all families without favor or exception or 'spotlights'."



Austin International Drag Foundation
Storytime



Sewing Pride Flags



Mini-Pride Parade



Community Night Spotlights

Goals & Benefits

- Thinkery as welcoming
- Reach new audiences
- Build empathy
- Thinkery as a community hub
- Staff development
- Build internal resources
- Contributed income!

“I didn’t know [Thinkery] was a place for my family [one with a child with a disability]. We can’t wait to come back!”



Improv with Joshua’s Stage



Bilingual storytime with Austin Public Library

Community Collaboration Project

LGBTQ Community Organizations



DMNS' Journey 2014 - 2016



DMNS
Community
Voices
Initiative



LGBT-rexes and Ally-sauruses
Staff Affinity Group



LGBT Center of Colorado

DMNS' Journey - 2014 - 2016



- Staff Training
- Family Programming
- Teen Programming
- Adult Programming



DMNS' Journey - 2017



- Tapped into experiences and knowledge of staff
- Conducted initial Empathetic Interview
- Explained ultimate goals of partnership
- Invited to Community Conversation

Ignite Learning

Melissa Russell

Program Manager of Integrated Education

Durham, NC

Our mission is to create a place of lifelong learning where people, from young child to senior citizen, embrace science as a way of knowing about themselves, their community, and their world.



“Our Ignite Learning partners help us turn our good intentions into good works.”

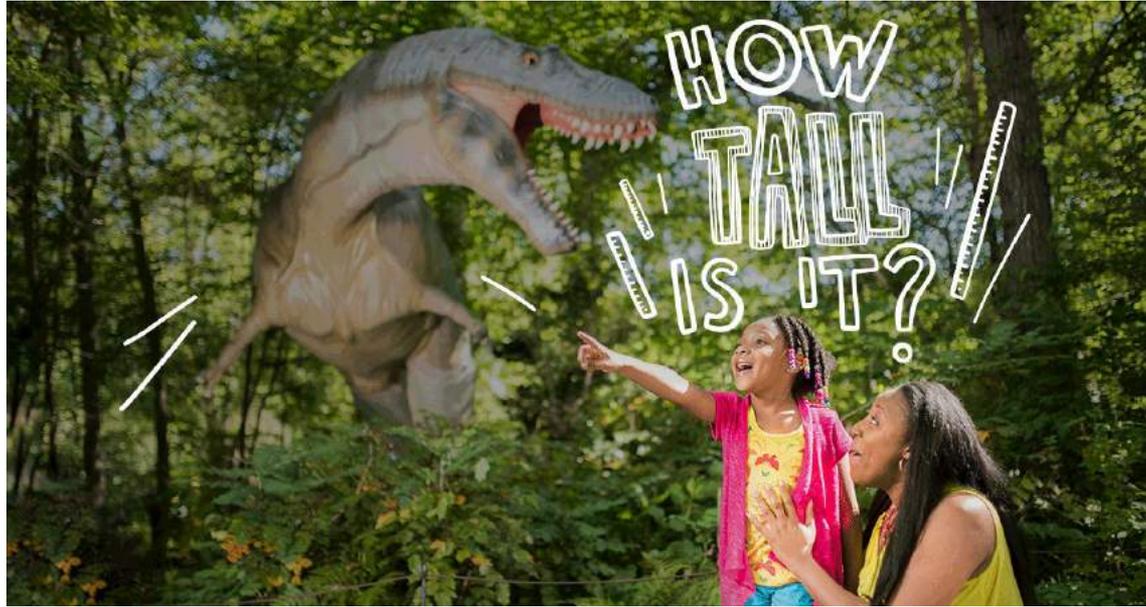
- The Museum partners with **22 social work agencies** to deliver the Ignite Learning subsidized membership program.
- This **\$5 membership**, admitting a family of up to 6 people per visit, serves nearly **685 families** in our community and continues to grow each year.



“We serve about 5,000 families. It’s **life-changing** for families that normally cannot afford to come to a museum like this. I know they appreciate it.”

“The Museum of Life and Science feels like a **safe place** to open up and always one to listen and work towards **building the relationship**. I truly appreciate it on behalf of the community of Durham.”





A museum staff member was walking around campus with a group of **Burmese refugees**. A grandmother, with an 8th grade education, saw a dinosaur model on exhibit. Through a translator she asked, “**what is this, is it alive?**” The staff member responded, “**no, they are now extinct, but at one time they were everywhere!**” She replied, “**even in my country?**”

Ignite Learning

Goals & Benefits

- Pathways to benefit more people in our community
- Builds understanding of underserved audiences
- Strengthens diversity and inclusion
- Closes the opportunity gap
- Deepens engagement with Ignite Learning members
- Creation of “Diversity Task Force”

Challenges

- Transportation
- People may not feel a sense of “belonging”
- Language
- Application logistics

INITIATIVE: | Create pathways for the Museum to benefit more people in our community.

BROADEN OUR REACH

Identify and build understanding of the various **communities underserved by informal science learning**

Invest in **partnerships** and **infrastructure** to strengthen diversity and inclusion of Museum audiences, programs, and experiences

Explore and **expand ways to close the opportunity gap**, especially in Durham County



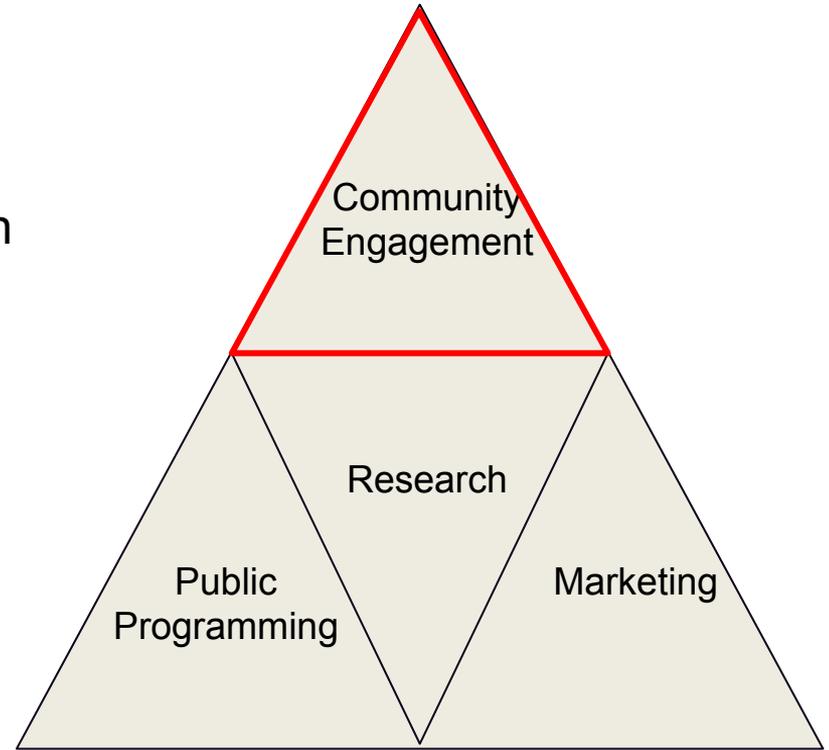
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Robby Callahan Schreiber
Career & Community Connections
Program Manager
St. Paul, MN



Project Goals & Structure

- Cultivate relationships with specific communities of color and American Indian communities
- Co-develop activities and events
- Create, document, and better understand a model that can be useful to others in informal science education



Phase 1

Family Groups Recruited

- 10 community partners
- 100+ family groups
- 2-years free SMM access
- Free parking
- Childcare embedded
- Food

Listening Sessions

- 11 sessions led by
community partners

Phase 2

Activity Design Workshops

- Invitation to Play. Tinker.
Make. together
- Co-creating activities

Open House Events

- Dedicated space to socialize
- Bilingual staff
- Greeters in lobby

Phase 3

Saturday Events

- Spring 2015
- Fall/Winter 2016

- Focused marketing
- Bilingual signage & surveys
- Free visits for friends/guests
- Post-project volunteer option

Final Celebration

Our Listening Session Questions

Relationship to SMM

- What do you think of when you hear “the Science Museum of Minnesota?”
- Based on your understanding, what happens at the museum?
 - How often do you visit?
 - What draws you to visit?
 - What prevents you from visiting?
- What are places you choose to spend time at with your family?
- What are opportunities the Science Museum of Minnesota could take to build stronger relationships with you and members of your community?

Reflect on Making

- What have you made lately? (built, fixed, created, customized, tinkered with, etc)
- What are things you have learned by making (building, fixing, creating, customizing, tinkering) or by watching others do these things?
- Who are makers in your community (family, neighbors, friends, school, work, church)?

Project Impacts

Translations:

Signage for *Play, Tinker, Make* public Saturday events are now in Spanish and Hmong.

First Time Visitors Guide:

Creation of a guide used *before* the first visit, based on feedback from participants.

New volunteer program:

Participants regularly bring new families to visit SMM and report on their experience.

Making Connections Gatherings:

Monthly opportunities for community engagement and feedback.

Trainings for front-line staff:

Sharing project data and racially charged incidents to prompt reflection and conversation.

New processes for project development:

Engage long-term with trusted community members, rather than a one-time focus group.



Everyday Encounters with Science

Veronika Nunez

Senior Community Engagement and
Learning Specialist

Tim Hecox

Federal Grants Coordinator



This work is a Journey.

OMSI's Journey - Community Engagement and Institutional Culture

A Shift in Institutional Culture

- Community engagement has been a driver for shifting our institutional culture
- Around 2008, OMSI created a Diversity Workgroup
- In 2015, OMSI created an equity statement
- In 2017, OMSI hired a new director level position, *Head of People and Culture*
- We just held internal listening sessions around how to communicate our commitment to equity

Community Engagement

- OMSI took a more intentional approach working with underrepresented communities ~12-15 years ago
- Federal grants has been a driver in this work
- We have developed strong relationships specifically with local Latino and Native American Communities
- We are now trying to become more thoughtful, systematic, and sustainable with our partnerships

We still have a long way to go.

How should we communicate our commitment to equity?

Todos son bienvenidos aquí. Здесь рады всем. 欢迎各位莅临. Tất cả mọi người đều được chào đón tại đây. الجميع مرحب به هنا.

جميع مرحب به هنا. All are welcomed here. 这里是、だれでも歓迎です。 欢迎各位莅临.



Dhamman halkan waa lagu soo dhowaynaaya. 这里是、だれでも歓迎です。 欢迎各位莅临. 这里是我们欢迎您的地方。 欢迎各位莅临.

OMSI EQUITY STATEMENT

OMSI respects, values and celebrates the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are. We believe that we will be successful in accomplishing our mission and vision when we seek out and respond to diversity of participation, thought and action. We will work to dismantle barriers to equity and access to the experiences OMSI provides and to create welcoming environments and conditions where all people can reach their full potential.

이 곳에 오시는 모든 분을 환영합니다. 这里是我们欢迎您的地方。 欢迎各位莅临.

Strategies for Community Engagement

- Work with partners rooted in the community (bridge people)
- Engage at the beginning - approach partners at ideation
- Adjust budget and concept of time - invest in the relationship
- Listen and respond to feedback
- Meet the needs of the partner and their community
- Go to them - for meetings, for programs, for the relationships
- Recognize the importance and complexity of language
- Engage multiple generations and voices
- Make space for cultural identity in the workplace
- Hire staff representative of your audiences
- Create safe spaces for difficult conversations
- Facilitate sustainable relationships

Collaborate with Integrity.

Projects in Collaboration with Latino Communities

Bilingual Outreach Programing & Events



Bilingual Exhibition Development



Projects in Collaboration with Native American Communities

Traditional First Food Displays



Citizen Science Programs & Traveling Exhibitions



Space Science Exhibits & Programs



Table Conversations



Learn more about our specific projects

What stood out to you?

What questions do you have?

What values inform your community engagement practices?

What strategies (shared or otherwise) do you utilize in your work?

Get or Stay in Touch



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