

# Children's Museum of Denver

## Annual Report 2010



# Our Mission

The mission of the  
Children's Museum of Denver  
is to create a community where  
children and their grownups  
learn through play.



# A Letter to Our Supporters

**“Change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.”**

- Nonprofit advocate Pauline R. Kezer

Dear Friends,

There's always something exciting and different happening at the Children's Museum of Denver. This year, however, the winds of change have been blowing at gale force! During the past 12 months, we've set another attendance record, chosen new leadership and opened a fabulously popular new exhibit. This is our biggest year since we opened our facility on the banks of the South Platte in 1984!

During the fiscal year that ended June 30, more than 293,000 children and adults visited the Museum. It was our fourth year in a row of record attendance. We consider our growing numbers of visitors to be a strong endorsement of the quality of our exhibits and programming.

However, we recognize that our success has some drawbacks: We've simply run out of room! In the near future, we will engage you, our supporters and visitors, in deciding how best to allow the Museum to grow in the coming years and better fulfill our mission of creating a vibrant community where children and their grownups learn through play.

Our newest exhibit, Bubbles, opened May 15 and thanks to its success, we know that we have a great model for developing future attractions that will engage children and excite them about learning. Bubbles is a success because it was “homegrown” by our talented exhibit and education staff members, with essential input from our guests who tested prototypes of Bubbles' elements throughout its development. You can learn more about Bubbles on pages 5 and 6.

The Museum's most exciting days lie ahead, under the guidance of new leaders. I am pleased to announce that Mike Yankovich, who joined the Museum in 2003, is the board's and search committee's unanimous choice to be president and CEO. I am also thrilled that Vatsala Pathy, founder of Rootstock Solutions, LLC, is our new board chair. Both selections took effect with the new fiscal year on July 1, 2010. Mike and Vatsala are perfect choices to help the Museum “stretch and grow and reach new heights,” as Pauline Kezer described change. We also count on your continued support and guidance as we move ahead. Thank you for helping make the Children's Museum of Denver such a success.

Sincerely,

*Deborah Wapensky*

Deborah Wapensky  
Board Chair, 2008-2010



# The Year's Milestones

Fiscal year 2010 was outstanding for the Children's Museum of Denver. We:

- **Opened Bubbles!** The result of four years of planning and prototyping, the Museum's new exhibit opened in May 2010 to rave reviews, providing children of all ages the opportunity to learn science concepts through floating, expanding, popping play!
- **Launched the Super Sand Dome** in the Museum's plaza in June, offering guests three months of sand castle-building, dinosaur footprint-making and beach-loving fun and learning in an air-conditioned inflatable dome.
- **Set an attendance record** for the fourth year in a row by serving more than 293,000 children and parents, teachers and other caregivers.
- **Provided more than 14,000 free admissions, bus transportation and memberships** to children from predominantly low-income elementary schools and childcare centers through the Sponsored Admissions and Memberships Program.
- **Welcomed more than 1,800 Head Start children and their families** through the City of Denver's 5 By 5 Project, providing each a free yearlong family membership to the Museum.
- **Completed the seventh year of the Museum's G.R.O.W. (Growing Respect by Observing our World) Science and Literacy Collaborative.** We increased the number of classrooms served to 55 during the past year from 19 in 2004. Since it began, G.R.O.W. has served more than 5,000 children from Denver and Adams County Title I schools, their teachers and families.
- **Continued to open our doors free to the public** the first Tuesday evening of each month, thanks to a generous sponsorship from Target Corporation, serving more than 11,000 children and their caregivers during the year. In all, more than 35,000 people have visited free since Target Tuesdays began in February 2007.
- **Welcomed new leadership.** The Board of Directors unanimously voted to promote Mike Yankovich to president and CEO of the Museum. Mike, who joined the staff in 2003 from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and has served here in a variety of capacities, succeeds Tom Downey, who left to head a local foundation.
- **Welcomed a new board chair.** The board also elected Vatsala Pathy as its leader. She has served on the board since 2007 and is the founder of Rootstock Solutions, LLC, which advises health-related organizations about identifying and engaging financial resources and strategic partnerships to achieve goals.

Super Sand Dome



CMD Fire Station No. 1



# The Financials

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support and revenues	
Gifts and grants	\$ 1,639,798
Earned revenue	\$ 1,597,595
Special events revenue-net	\$ 182,661
Interest & miscellaneous income	\$ 30,038
<b>Total support and revenues</b>	<b>\$ 3,450,092</b>
Expenses	
Program	\$ 2,350,055
Supporting	\$ 982,010
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,332,065</b>
Change in net assets	118,027
Net assets at beginning of year	4,061,281
<b>Net assets at end of year</b>	<b>\$ 4,179,308</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

Assets	
Current assets	\$ 567,994
Investments	\$ 1,248,933
Property and equipment-net	\$ 2,880,037
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 4,696,964</b>
Liabilities and net assets	
Liabilities	\$ 517,656
Net assets	
Unrestricted	\$ 3,952,720
Temporarily restricted	226,588
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$ 4,179,308</b>
<b>Total net assets &amp; liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 4,696,964</b>

The Children's Museum of Denver, Inc. is audited annually by an independent audit firm. Copies of the audit are available upon request.



GROW



Bubbles

# Bubble-Mania!

**Four years in the making, Bubbles has generated fabulous reviews and enthusiastic crowds since it opened May 15.**

Nearly 2,181 guests visited the Museum that first weekend, twice the number on the same weekend a year earlier. And the visitors keep coming!

The new exhibit, complete with kid-sized lab coats and goggles, allows children of all ages to experiment with shimmering, floating, expanding, popping play.

Bubbles was developed by the Museum's education and exhibits teams through consultation with other children's museums and thorough testing by our own Museum guests. Taking and refining the best bubbles concepts nationally, our designers built prototypes in-house and let Museum guests try them out. Bubbles gave the Museum a new approach to exhibit development that we expect to use for all future exhibits.

The Museum set out to create an exhibit that was cutting-edge, inspired children to delve into the science of bubbles, drew adults to play and learn alongside their children and maximized available space. We think you'll agree that we hit the mark!

Bubbles received generous financial support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, the Titus Foundation and other generous donors.

## What Bubbles Visitors Say

"Bubbles is awesome! Any ideas on how I can get my kid to leave the exhibit?"

"My kids are 7 and 12 and I just bought a membership."

"I can't believe I took so many pictures! Do you want to see them?"

"We will definitely be back. My kids love bubbles! This is like nothing we have ever seen."

Drop Zone



Big Bubble Maker



Bubble Window



# Bubbles at a Glance

The Bubble Booth allows guests to experience a bubble from the inside out! Standing in a four-panel bubble "box," children learn about surface tension and airflow while they time how long it takes for the bubble walls to pop.

The Bubble Table and Tools encourages open-ended experiments with a variety of instruments to apply the scientific method. Children experiment with shapes, sizes, surface area and air currents.

With a crank of a wheel, the Big Bubble Maker forms giant horizontal bubbles that grow to six feet or more. Children can measure length, volume and rate of growth - with ample opportunities for popping!

In the Drop Zone, large, vapor-filled bubbles slowly grow and descend from above. Guests learn about timing, force, gravity and evaporation as they observe the growing bubbles and engage with them as they fall and burst.

The Vapor Station lets visitors fill bubbles with vapor, create bubbles within bubbles, produce streams of bubbles and more, teaching them about water vapor mist, air turbulence and measurement.

At the Bubble Window guests turn a wheel to create oversized sheets of bubble film that they can touch and feel. They learn about surface tension and refraction of light and can measure the thickness of the film and study its colors.

Vapor Station



Bubble Booth



Bubble Table & Tools



# Programs and Playscapes

Visitors can always count on finding something new at the Museum. Each month brings a different theme for our ever-changing daily programming: Stellar Science, Messin' Around, Our Diverse Community, Boo-tiful Bugs, Blast from the Past, Winter Wonderland, Wild Wild West, Fairytales and Fables, All About Animals, Planet Earth, Get Caught Reading and Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes.

School groups love to use the Museum as a learning laboratory. Last year, more than 5,600 children visited the Museum on class trips and freely explored our 11 educational exhibits such as The Assembly Plant, Under My Feet and Over My Head, My Market and, of course, the new Bubbles exhibit, which opened in May.

Another 14,000 school children came here for facilitated educational programming such as Around the World with Professor Wiggleworts, World Dance and Drumming or Star Lab, our portable planetarium.

Our talented educators also took programs into the classroom, serving more than 8,100 children there, with such programs as the Earth Balloon, featuring our 26-foot-tall inflatable globe, or Stuffedee, our bigger-than-life-sized doll with removable organs.

All our programming was updated to reflect new standards adopted by the Colorado Board of Education in late 2009, helping assure teachers that our programs support curricula.

Stellar Science



Assembly Plant



Fantastic Fossils



ARTS à la Carte



Click Clack Train Tracks



ARTS à la Carte



# Thank You, Donors

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[www.mychildsmuseum.org](http://www.mychildsmuseum.org)

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