

WALLACE FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN ARTS PARTICIPATION GRANT



# LEAP

WITH THE SPEED



The **Speed**  
Art Museum

## WALLACE FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN ARTS PARTICIPATION GRANT

January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007

\$800,000

### OVERVIEW

#### Goals:

The Speed implemented a LEAP project that tested a model of participation building. The project included development, implementation, and evaluation of activities for families with children and youth. The overall participation goal of the project was to measurably diversify, broaden, and deepen the museum's family audience, increasing the annual number of family participants from an average of 30,000 to 50,000 per year by the end of the grant period through exhibitions, programs, events, and communications. Goals for the project also included building "listening" skills of board, staff and volunteers, developing a participant-focused museum culture, and creating in-house knowledge to evaluate success. Project results and effective practices learned were shared with a variety of community, regional, and national organizations through conferences, symposia, and one-on-one visits.



### STRATEGIES

#### Planning and Research:

A LEAP Project Committee was formed and comprised of 43 representatives from the three-targeted groups (current, inclined, and disinclined family participants), partner organizations (e.g., Louisville Free Public Library, Kentucky Educational Television, etc.), and community and social services groups, as well as key staff and selected Board members. The Committee met throughout the grant and reviewed and refined implementation strategies for specific family programs, activities, and communications. Committee members also participated in communication of family activities through their various communities and groups and attended many of the events themselves. Ongoing partnerships were developed, nurtured, and sustained.

A "Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums" study was conducted during the first year of the project. This study involved "listening" to the three participant groups and understanding their perceptions and attitudes toward art and the Speed, their comfort level with art, and barriers toward art and visiting the Speed and museums in general with their families.

Baseline measurements of participation, membership, and attitudes toward the museum were obtained using established tracking procedures and intercept surveys. Perceptions were tracked throughout the grant period and noted.

## Family Programs and Activities:

Weekend family programs and multi-cultural heritage events for families that relate to the Speed's permanent collection and special exhibitions were held throughout the grant period and are ongoing.

## Two Pilot Programs:

*The Art Explorer* project, implemented first at three local schools and now sustained at 12 schools, features extended involvement in the museum and family participation.

*The Youth Apprentice Program*, a museum training program for youth, is a two-year program that fosters job skills for working in a museum or cultural organization and life skills for art appreciation.

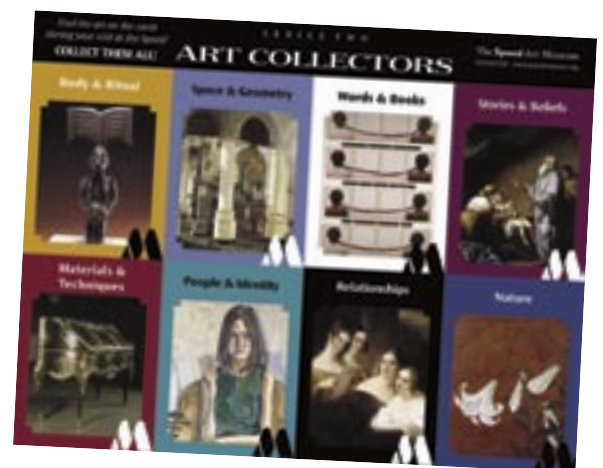
## New Knowledge:

The *Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums Study* showed that visitors were highly satisfied with the museum galleries but wanted more information and interpreters to help bring the art to life for them and their children. This finding helped museum staff in deciding to implement an interpretive reinstatement of the galleries. Visits became a much more active experience and 94% of visitors are even more satisfied with their experience.



## New Interpretation:

The Interpretive Reinstallation of permanent collection galleries created more human interaction in the galleries through Discovery Cases with hands-on activities such as music, models, and docent interpreters who tell the stories of the art. Additional family resources as recommended by the *Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums Study* included a series of orientation guides entitled *Five Easy Pieces* for families to use in talking about art. "Seek and Find" Gallery Activities were also created for main gallery areas. A family orientation area was introduced as well as memory objects for families to take home. A set of 12 sheets of Art Trading Cards each with eight images of works of art in the museum's collection and discovery questions to prompt discussion were also made available. With these tools, families' comfort level in the museum has increased and satisfaction remained strong.



Reinstallation of the Art Learning Center (ALC) including Art Sparks Interactive Gallery with updated activity stations and components that support increased involvement of families from the three target groups. A new hands-on art making room was installed to encourage artistic creativity as a component of every family visit. Satisfaction with this area was also high at 92% of respondents highly satisfied.



### Communications:

Expansion of partnerships with partner organizations, to broaden and diversify participation. Outreach increased dramatically to 22 fairs, festivals, and family events taking the museum to many neighborhoods and parts of the city. Museum staff provided art making activities as well as art appreciation activities.

Development of incentives for school tour participants to return to the museum with their families. Art Trading cards were used with school groups and postcards were distributed inviting them to visit with their parents.

Targeted advertising and direct mail to reach participants was increased through the LEAP grant.



### Infrastructure Building:

Staff and volunteer training in community and customer responsiveness was conducted.

Docent and volunteer training with a focus on tactics that increase the comfort level of inclined and disinclined participants in the museum environment was held.

Board involvement and an orientation presentation about the participation-building approach took place during the grant period.

Staff training about evaluation and data collection tools is ongoing.

## Dissemination of Project Results:

Attendance at the Wallace Foundation's conference for LEAP participants.

Presentations at professional conferences.

Distribution of interim and final reports.

Posting of results on the Speed's website with links to <http://www.wallacefoundation.org>.



## Measuring Success

### Progress Indicators:

Increase attendance at the Speed Art Museum by families with children and youth from an estimated 30,000 per year to 50,000 per year. This goal was reached by the end of year four and attendance continues to remain strong in 2008. The museum celebrated the 10th anniversary of Art Sparks with special hands-on activities, performances, and birthday cake and nearly 1,600 attended on a single Saturday.

Additional measurement data, including repeat visits, the number of family memberships, and attitudes toward the museum experience, were collected annually. Repeat visits increased and 74% of respondents indicated they would return again within the year, first time visits to the museum increased to 50% of total family participants in year three.

Program attendance measures were used to gauge progress throughout the project.

Art Learning Center (ALC) reinstallation Phase I complete and West African and Dutch Activity Areas (Phase II) will be installed in March 2008.

Enhanced gallery interpretive materials launched and in use.

Board and staff training ongoing.

Dissemination of project information and interim results at conferences such as the National Art Education Association, the Getty Next Generation Leadership Conference, the Southeast Museums Conference, the Association of Art Museum Directors, Kentucky Arts Council, Greater Louisville Arts and Cultural Attractions Network, the Center for Non-Profit Excellence, Jefferson County Public School System, Metro Parks and Recreation and Neighborhoods Department Community Centers, and Louisville Metro Mayor's Office. One on one information shared with colleagues throughout the museum field.

Museum outreach increased to include local fairs, festivals, Parent Teacher Association events, Education Gallery Programs, and Professional Development Sessions for non-school instructors.

## Meeting Progress Indicators:

**Broadening and Diversifying.** Over the course of the grant the percentage of families visiting the Speed who had never before visited with a child grew and stayed between 40% and 50% of families. Two to 7 year olds and 8 to 12 year olds were the primary age ranges of visitors' children. Respondents continued to feel the children they brought to the museum had an enjoyable experience. The measures "mostly cool" and "okay" and "boring" were the indicators tested for satisfaction. 79% of respondents felt their children had a mostly cool experience and 17% had an okay experience, three visitors indicated they felt their children had a boring experience. A visit to the Art Learning Center was part of 82% of family visitors experience and was the children's favorite part of the museum experience.

**Deepening.** Evaluation of current audiences revealed a high satisfaction rate with the museum experience. There was an average of 450 completed on-site interviews each year of the grant with telephone follow-up to an additional 302 participants per year.

The Art Learning Center rated high among participants. 92% of respondents were highly satisfied with their visit to the ALC and planned to return. This represents a 4% increase over 2006. 7% were somewhat satisfied and less than 1% of respondents were dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the museum as a whole also remained high throughout the grant. On average, 93% of respondents were highly satisfied with their visit, 6% were somewhat satisfied, and less than 1% were dissatisfied.



**Steady Progress Toward the Goal.** In year three of the grant 38,967 museum visitors visited with one or more children in the party between the ages of two and 12 years, this upward trend continued in 2007 with about the same number attending, even though the Art Learning Center was closed for a full quarter of the year for renovations. Participation in family activities and museum outreach outside the museum increased substantially in 2007 to 28,339 from 3,830 in 2006. When museum outreach and in-gallery family participation are combined total 2007 attendance by families with children became 66,806 visitors. Museum on-site attendance was up 12% from 93,000 in FY 2006 to 101,545 in 2007. Overall family participation in the museum was the highest ever reported. Analysis of museum attendance data indicates, that in the coming year, increases in museum family participation are highly likely with enhancements to the Art Learning Center.

**LEAP Project Committee.** The committee met throughout the grant period. Museum staff also met individually with members of the LEAP Project Community Committee. Closer collaborations with members from Kentucky Educational Television, the Metro Louisville Office for Youth Services, and the Metro Parks and Recreation Community Centers were forged. The Committee was invited to all exhibition openings during the grant period. The hands-on interactives available in the museum galleries were part of those openings.

**Action Items from the “Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums” study.** Participants in all three-target groups (current, inclined, and disinclined) continued to like the concept of the museum’s family day programs. They requested more flexibility and diversity of activities for all age levels. Staff members responded by creating an extended schedule that included continuous activity on select Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with art making activities, tours, and musical performances throughout the day. Themes of the activities in the Hands-On Art Room change with the exhibition schedule or other museum activities and the experience remains wildly popular. In the summer of 2007, a giant, walk inside Camera Obscura was created with the assistance of the University of Louisville. The giant camera afforded participants to walk inside the camera and draw what they saw through the camera’s lens.

All participants in the Study wanted more activities for families throughout the museum, not just the Family Interactive Gallery in Art Sparks. To support this finding, the museum prototyped and tested activity cases for use in the African, Native American, Dutch, Antiquities, and English Renaissance areas of the museum. The cases proved very successful and are now available in those galleries during weekend activities, select Thursday evenings, and all Family Day events. Special brochures to promote family discussion and interaction and Gallery Seek and Find activities are also now in use. Testing is now in place to pilot even more interactive activities in the museum galleries.

Participants indicated they wanted an area in the museum for families to congregate and to get information about artworks that may interest them, special programs for families, and family friendly maps of the museum. To support this finding, the museum worked with an architectural firm, Bravura, (who had previously designed the museum’s ticket sales lobby) to design a Family Orientation Area. The Family Orientation Area is a new tool for making all museum visitors feel welcome at the Speed. Museum volunteers, education department staff, and Youth Apprentices staff the Family Orientation Area.

Participants in the Study wanted the museum to provide more didactic material to use in the galleries with their children and to review in advance of their visit. To support this finding, the museum created three new family brochures. The first is a new brochure just for families with lists of the types of programs and services the museum provides its young visitors. A family-friendly gallery map will be included. The second is a new semi-annual newsletter that lists programs, exhibitions, and other educational materials that may be of interest to families, children, and schools. This publication includes a poster size image of a specific work of art in the museum’s collection or an upcoming special exhibit that may be of interest to families. A new object is selected with each new publication. The third is “Five Easy Pieces,” a family guide featuring five objects from the museum’s collection that contain information and strategies for engaging young visitors with works of art. There are a total of five “Five Easy Pieces” guides in the series. A series of 12 art trading card sheets each with eight selected objects from the collection serve as memory objects. Activity questions on the back of each card prompt discussion.

**Baseline measurements.** First time visitors with children accounted for 16% of total family visitors in 2004. This number rose to 50% in 2006 and stayed fairly steady throughout the grant period. We expect this number to remain in the 40% range in the long-term. Family participation in the museum has grown from an estimated 30,000 visitors a year to more than 50,000 at the end of 2007. With additions to the Art Learning Center, a vibrant array of special traveling exhibitions, more hands-on interaction with interpreters in the galleries during peak hours, increased communication to families, and family-friendly leaflets and materials, we expect this number to grow. For 11 years, strategic research projects regarding current and potential visitor needs and expectations have been conducted. The Wallace Grant has propelled the museum forward using this ongoing research into a true culture of visitor engagement. A feedback section on the museum's website, a visitor feedback wall at the exit of the museum, and new in-gallery visitor journals provide opportunities for qualitative research from all types of museum visitors. An ongoing statistically valid intercept survey continues to be administered and augments qualitative research. The new culture of engagement has inspired the staff to create a new strategic plan centered around core values that extend the Wallace learning into the entire museum.



**Updated program and communication strategies in place.** The *Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums Study* revealed that potential participants wanted to see more information about the museum on advertisements and messages during television programs their children watch. The study also showed that in many cases, children are the drivers for decisions about family entertainment. A partnership with local cable television service, Insight Communications, provided 30-second spots about the museum and the Art Learning Center on channels such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Animal Planet and ABC Family. This proved an effective method of getting the word out and will continue beyond the grant period.

The Museum developed a partnership with KET (Kentucky Educational Television) in 2006 and it will continue beyond the grant. Visits from several PBS Kids characters, promotional spots and other opportunities are part of the partnership.

The museum will continue its successful advertising efforts in family publications such as *Kentuckiana Family*, *Louisville Parent*, and *The Courier-Journal*. Additionally, targeted direct mail will continue.

**Board Training.** Board training in the continued transformation of the museum's culture to one of true participant engagement began at the outset of the grant and is ongoing. Board members participated in a day-long workshop with facilitator Jerry Yoshitomo on participation building. At the end of the day, the Board held a reception for area cultural organization leaders and Board members to meet and talk with Mr. Yoshitomo and learn more about the Speed's project and Wallace learnings.

**Staff and volunteer training in participation-building tactics.** Participation in the Wallace LEAP grant has created a new way of thinking for the staff and Board at the Speed, resulting in **increased engagement at all levels of the museum experience**—engagement with visitors, engagement with volunteers, engagement with the community, and engagement with the neighborhood. A new FY 07–12 Strategic Plan was written with the goal of maintaining a **visitor-centered museum culture**, offering visitors an exciting, dynamic experience with art. Museum staff at all levels of the organization and the Board of Governors worked together to write the plan. Guided by research and formative and summative evaluation, the museum will use the model, created through the LEAP grant, for building participation among families as a guide for museum staff in reaching out to additional museum users such as adults and college students as well as stakeholders on a variety of levels. This visitor-centered over-arching theme also extends to how the organization does business, how its team works together, and the museum’s overall culture. The values are: being inclusive and engaging, being about substance and credibility, delivering on our promises, acting as great collaborators, and conveying our evolution from “Good to Great.” The goals of the new plan are to expand the public’s understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Speed’s art collection, deepen and extend the educational experience with the communities we serve through programs and exhibitions, create a closer relationship with the University of Louisville, surrounding neighborhoods, the larger community, and the bi-state region, ensure the museum’s long-term financial strength, and achieve an expansion plan that provides our visitors with the most meaningful and engaging experience with art.

## Pilot Programs

### Art Explorers

Art Explorers is an extended learning process to teach students about art, and other Kentucky core content subject areas in a multi-visit customized program created in collaboration with interested teachers. The primary goals of the program are to help teachers and students connect with the museum and its collections in a meaningful way as both a cultural destination and as a venue for learning more about the visual arts and world cultures. Each project culminates in an event such as students serving as exhibition “tour guides” or in art projects or exhibitions showcasing what they have learned.

The Art Explorers now involves over 500 students in 12 schools, up from 210 students in six schools in 2005 and includes one, two, or three-visit programs including tours of the museum collection. Visits covered a broad range of topic areas including Roman and Greek, Native American, African, Painting, Modernism, and Contemporary Art.



The program continues to engage teachers and students in new ways to explore and deepen their learning experiences with the Speed and its various collections. The program also provides the groundwork to aid in students' discovery of art and how art has shaped the world around them. The various Art Explorer projects utilize museum resources at the respective school sites before inviting the students to tour the museum. In-class activities include art slide lectures, hands-on art making, and interactive exercises using creative thinking skills. Post-visit activities include writing assignments and/or the production of student artworks relating to their museum experience.

## A Teacher Speaks

Cyndi Young, a middle school art teacher who has hosted the program at Noe Middle school remarked, "My students have been able to learn so much through this program, and they come to 'own' the museum once they become so familiar with it."

## Youth Apprentice Program (YAP)

Beginning its fifth year, YAP is a mentor based training program that works with artists, arts and cultural organization professionals, and Speed Museum staff to develop a core of youth apprentices (aged 14 to 18) with artistic, community, planning, organizing, social, and working skills with an emphasis on arts and cultural based work. The program, overseen by the Wallace Grant Education Outreach Coordinator, consists of community outreach program development (arts-based projects in the community designed and implemented in collaboration with artists and museum educators), and peer-to-peer training at the Speed, with on-site visits to cultural institutions and artist studios in Louisville and abroad. The youth apprentices are employed by the Speed Art Museum during the summer months as both museum art camp counselors and community outreach presenters.



Apprentices spent every Thursday evening of the school year meeting with the program coordinator at the museum and participating in training sessions on cultural careers with museum staff in all areas of museum operations including curators, administrators, and educators. During these meetings the YAP developed and organized teen events at the Speed such as "Rock n' Gawk: Teen Night" an after-hours party exclusively for teens at the Speed Art Museum. The teen night was the first of its kind: live music, art making and a scavenger hunt were among the activities. The YAP event was a huge success, drawing in over 250 teenage visitors to the museum. They continued with the Speed Museum's first ever teen Halloween party, Spook at the Speed, with 500 teenagers attending the event. "The Funktion" boasted a local teen band and rap artist, t-shirt making, karaoke, and henna tattoo art.

The Youth Apprentice Program made over 35 presentations each year to local libraries, community centers, and senior centers during the summer. There were over 2,400 total participants in the presentations. The YAP apprentices also contributed over 800 volunteer hours for outreach programs, family programs, and workshops at the museum during the grant. Their

work was featured on the local CBS affiliate WLKY and the teens themselves were interviewed. *The Courier-Journal* featured the teens several times throughout the four year project and the Louisville Free Public Library also highlighted their work in its newsletter.

The subjects of the YAP outreach programs were inspired by the Speed's special exhibitions and included a 20-minute presentation on the history and relevance of the related art followed by a hands-on workshop. They visited locations including Louisville Central Community Center, New Directions Housing Corporation, daycare centers, and the Portland Promise Center. The "Color My World" program included a presentation about the lives and times of African-American artists in the 20th century and a hands-on abstract painting workshop influenced by the alternative painting techniques of Louisville native, Sam Gilliam. The project was implemented and conceived by the team of apprentices, under the guidance of the YAP coordinators.

In preparation for the summer outreach program, the YAP participated in a two-day public speaking workshop coordinated by the Associate Communications Specialist from Jefferson Community College. The YAP were introduced to basic public speaking fundamentals, practice, and presentation skills.

### Apprentices Speak

One apprentice commented, "YAP has taught me better public speaking skills, taught me about art and cultural institutions, taught me a lot about myself and how I interact with others, and so much more. A memorable experience could be with a boy I helped get over his fears of painting badly by showing him a Jackson Pollock painting and telling him that he could see those in museums, and that paintings didn't have to be recognizable objects to be great. On their way out the boy showed me some of his paintings and his mom thanked me for helping him get over his ideas about what art had to be."

### Art Learning Center (ALC) Facilitation, Planning, and Prototype Development

Attendance figures in Art Sparks grew from 16,000 at the outset of the grant to 30,000 participants in 2007. Updates and changes to the gallery were made and were prompted by the study of new families and school's use of the space, changes in the museum's collection, and in response to new research in interactive learning. Through a partnership for the summer reading programs at the Louisville Free Public Library, outlying border counties, and Southern Indiana libraries, approximately 28,000 free family passes to Art Sparks were awarded. Redemption is about 5-8% annually.

### Prototype Development for Gallery Reinstallation

The results of the *Ways of Knowing Art and Art Museums* caused the museum to consider not a thematic reinstallation of the entire collection but an "**interpretive reinstallation**" or enhancement of the permanent collection instead. The in-gallery materials and interactives are an important part of the visitor experience and will continue to be refined and enhanced in the coming years.

## Dissemination of Project Information

Education Director Cynthia Moreno presented research findings at the Getty conference for Museum Interactivity. The museum hosted a seminar for 110 members of Louisville's Arts and Cultural Attractions Council on the findings from LEAP research. Director Peter Morrin and Projects Manager Penny Peavler presented a seminar on the LEAP findings at the Annual Center for Non-Profit Excellence Conference in 2005. The Speed became a finalist for Louisville non-profit organization of the year by Business First magazine in 2005 for its advances in participation building. Director Emeritus Peter Morrin presented LEAP results at the Getty's Annual Next Gen Leadership Conference in 2006. Special Projects Manager Penny Peavler and Family Programs Curator Bryan Warren presented a seminar on Arts Participation to staff members of the Metro Louisville Parks and Recreation Community Centers in 2007. LEAP findings and the Speed's new culture of engagement were also the focus of a seminar at the Center for Non-Profit Excellence conducted by Penny Peavler and Paula Hale in 2006 and 2007. Kentucky Educational Television premiered *Art to Heart*, an eight-part series about the importance of the arts as a form of early self-expression for children. The series, which was distributed nationally, featured information from the Speed's LEAP project and the Art Learning Center.

## Wallace Grant Provides Meaningful Changes

It is not an overstatement to say that working with the Wallace Foundation and participating in the LEAP grant transformed the Speed Art Museum in significant and meaningful ways. An 80-year old institution that focused on listening to visitors was changed into an institution that goes beyond listening to hearing what the museum can be for the community. This project tested a model of participation among families. The researched and implemented model was successful in attracting significantly more families to the museum, creating repeat visits, and visits that were memorable and meaningful. This model is now being used to create a model of participation building for other museum constituencies including donors, government officials, adult visitors, and schools. Family programming tested and sustained through this grant will be continued and refined. Outreach efforts that were dramatically increased during LEAP are now a regular part of the museum's program.

The museum's new strategic plan was created out of the vision that is the LEAP grant. The plan solidifies the change in museum culture and provides a platform for communicating how the institution is now different. It is a more collaborative plan created by Staff and Board working hand-in-hand with the community to propel the museum forward on the path to be all that it can be for its constituents.

New museum staff leadership embraces the new cultural philosophy of the institution and are using it as a platform for growth.

January 2008

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Supporting ideas.  
Sharing solutions.  
Expanding opportunities.®



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