

President's Corner



Kevin Sullivan, President and CEO of The Children's Museum

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Well, with summer over, it's a good time for some reflection.

Will it soon be two years here for me already? I'm glad to say, thanks to a supportive Board of Trustees and great staff, we are doing well. In this short time, The Children's Museum has produced a small operating surplus to reinvest this year and turned around years of creeping long-term debt. We look forward to a time when we can do more with more, but at least we have successfully done more with less. Attendance and membership are steady. Contributed revenue from our corporate and foundation friends is up, although individual donations from members and friends are lagging - *hint, hint*. But all together, these are no small accomplishments at a time when so many others are struggling, even those unlike The Children's Museum that are publicly financed.

This past summer, our vacation science camp was strong, including a special Rocket Day with help from our friends at Hamilton Sundstrand and more focus on the environment. Science educators went out to Camp Courant for the first time. We added a new show in the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium and brought back laser rock shows for a limited run (they'll be back next summer). Croc Night and Birds of Prey were fun, and we have some new rescues at the Wildlife Sanctuary, including an Egyptian Deathstalker scorpion. We also partnered in a new professional development program for priority school teachers focused on bringing telescopes and astronomy into the classroom. What's ahead? There's Wolf Night, a new series of astronomy programs, and expanded science outreach to schools and youth groups.

Beyond all the family fun, our educational mission is more important than ever.

This year's statewide science assessment results make it even clearer that our schools cannot do it alone. While having somewhat improved, 42% of 5th graders and 39% of 8th graders performed below goal in science. As for 10th graders, 57% were below goal. These results are well behind performance in math, reading and writing. Statewide results also mask huge disparities in high-need school districts. In Hartford, for example, 84% of 5th graders, 78% of 8th graders, and 90% of 10th graders perform below goal in science. Focusing on children from preschool through early middle school, The Children's Museum is uniquely positioned to help get science education right from the start - helping kids from preschool to middle school, hands-on, to appreciate the natural world and develop a lifetime of science awareness, achievement, and attainment.

See you at The Children's Museum this fall.

the children's museum

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