

**ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE CITY OF SALEM  
A.C. GILBERT'S DISCOVERY VILLAGE**

Fiscal year July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008

Prepared by: Pamela A. Vorachek, Executive Director

The mission of A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village is to:

- ❖ **Provoke curiosity**
  - ❖ **Inspire awe**
  - ❖ **Awaken interest**
  - ❖ **Foster enjoyment**
  - ❖ **Encourage learning and**
  - ❖ **Enable understanding**
- In all youth.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village** is a children's museum where exploration, experimentation, and learning all work hand in hand. Open 361 days a year, A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village is a regional destination for hands-on workshops, classes, camps, birthday parties, and exploration. We provide interactive exhibits in the arts, sciences and humanities as well as an extensive museum-based and outreach educational program.

This year 75,393 visitors ventured through our gates bringing our total number of visitors to 1,235,587. General admissions accounted for 35 percent of our annual attendance. Members accounted for 32 percent, and group visits accounted for 17 percent of our attendance. We had over 900 visitors per day on two occasions and over 9,500 visitors in two months. In keeping with our mission of reaching all youth, our museum welcomed 17 percent of all our visitors at no charge! Through guest passes, scholarships, birthday parties, or as part of the reciprocal Association of Science and Technology Center program, we seek innovative ways to encourage attendance through free and low cost admissions.

Once again, we gave tours to several groups of educational visitors. Two-dozen Costa Rican educators visited and played in the museum. Our expertise was a resource for staff in other museums, most notable the Science Factory in Eugene and a start-up museum in Kansas City. We hosted the Salem Keizer Teacher Leaders. Twenty-eight Masters of Arts in Teaching students along with three professors from Willamette University also visited the museum to see our facility and hear about our programming. In sharing our mission with fellow educators, we demonstrate the ideas, programs, and workshops that make the Village a unique educational venue.

This year, the Village began a process of evaluation and reflection in which we internally evaluated our programs. Through a prestigious grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, we began studying public perception of the museum. A select group of community members began a two-year public perception evaluation of A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village. Activities included surveying visitors, assessing public perceptions of family-friendly activities in Salem, and hosting small focus groups. We've compiled all the information into one document and a reviewer from another museum will meet with us next year to continue the evaluation.

A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village encouraged and coordinated two public workshops brought by the Respect for All Project. Respect for All coordinators considered conducting the workshops in Portland, but we convinced them that holding the workshops in Salem was a necessity. They conducted two workshops: Diversity and Anti-Bullying. The workshops were designed for youth leaders.

**Salem is very fortunate to have a great area  
for children to learn and grow.  
— Visitor, Salem**

## **MUSEUM BUILDINGS AND EXHIBITS**

### Gilbert House

A museum favorite exhibit, Laballotory (also known as the ball room) is now installed in the Science Factory in Eugene. We moved Laballotory last September to make room for a new exhibit called Go Figure! Go Figure! combines math and literacy for the two – seven-year-olds by using favorite storybooks and activities. In June 2008, we moved and reconfigured our Shadow Room so that it is now the Undersea Cave of Frozen Shadows where you can capture your shadow on three walls! When the exhibit is complete, children in the viewing room will “operate” the controls of a “submarine”.

All of the exhibits in the Gilbert House (Bubble Room, Body Basics, Toddler Room, Castle Theater, Laballotory, and Toy Inventor's Workshop) continue to be popular.

We re-carpeted the Gilbert House in fall 2007.

### Rockenfield-Bean House

In June 2008, we moved the Cave of Frozen Shadows to the Gilbert House and installed Recollections. Recollections is a colorful, dazzling projection which allows visitors to create vivid, full-size, time-delayed images of themselves. Visitors move about in dance-like motions to create dozens of time-lapse and computer-generated personal silhouettes. Combining computer technology, a color camera, a large screen projector, and a special retro-reflective screen, artist

Ed Tannenbaum has created an environment that explores time and motion in beautiful colors. Mr. Tannenbaum came to personally install the exhibit over a two-day period.

### Parrish House

The Village's exhibits about A.C. Gilbert and dinosaurs remain popular. We designated two rooms in upstairs Parrish for the preschool that we will introduce in September 2008.

### Outdoor Discovery Center (a.k.a. A.C.'s Backyard)

In November 2007, we added an ice cream truck exhibit piece to the courtyard. It has lights for night events and we use it for many drop-in activities. The Little Gem grocery store and the Wilson-Durbin House were painted in September 2007. Once again, many service club volunteer groups helped preserve the wood by applying sealer in September 2007.

With a TOT grant, we remodeled our public service building which included floor painting and sealing, painting walls, and some new hardware. We now have the tiniest toilet in Salem!

**Kids had fun (ages 12 and 7). Well done.  
Made a good family day while on  
vacation.  
— Visitor, Wadsworth, IL**

## **GRANTS**

We received many grants and sponsorships in the last fiscal year.

### Facilities

- \$9,400 from the Transient Occupancy Tax for the Restroom Remodel project
- \$10,000 from Trust Management Services for the Shadow Room and Recollections
- \$1,000 from Marion Cultural Development Corporation for the Brazilian Rainforest Theater
- \$50,000 from the Collins Foundation for the Exhibits Renovations project
- \$10,000 from the Ann & Bill Swindells Foundation for the Exhibits Renovations project

### Program

- \$5,000 from the Jubitz Foundation for Foster Family Fridays
- \$5,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax for the A.C. Gilbert Birthday Collector's Showcase event
- \$4,994 from the Gannett Foundation for Foster Family Fridays
- \$1,000 from the Salem Foundation for Teacher Training

**It is still as fun as it was when I was a kid.  
Happy to see my children enjoying it too.  
— Visitor, Tacoma, WA**

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village mission celebrates children's curiosity and encourages behaviors that come to them naturally — asking questions, exploring the world around them, and testing ideas through play. We continue to offer afterschool programming, on-site workshops and classes, outreach classes and Girl Scout badge days, all of which foster experiences for children to play, learn, discover, explore, and challenge their surroundings while building confidence, knowledge, and independence.

Our Education Department offers several different types of hands-on classes and programs with subject content that supplements classroom teaching and meets the Oregon State Standards for educational content.

At the Village we offered over 50 summer day camps and workshops and had approximately 500 children participate. We conducted afterschool and outreach programming in 22 schools. We taught 390 classes for 9,480 student contact hours. This includes programming in Aumsville, Central School District, Salem-Keizer, and several more districts. We also have a strong partnership with the Salem YWCA for an afterschool program, DaVinci Girls, which focuses on the sciences. We once again hosted a day dedicated to homeschoolers in the fall. One of the Village teachers, Debbie Schmidt presented Hands on Science at the Oregon Science Teachers Association conference for 60 participants.

The last half of the fiscal year was focused toward analysis of our education programs. Each program was evaluated on two primary criteria:

1. Margin vs. Mission — financial margin to cover expenses and fit with the A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village Mission
2. Enrollment data for classes and workshops over the past three years

Using data to drive the decisions, some shifting took place in the focus of program development. We developed strategies to limit exposure to financial loss, simultaneously instituting continuous program improvement, quality control, and accountability. We created new programming and changed some existing programs.

**This class was excellent! ... I was really  
impressed and I am not easily impressed.  
Thank you!  
— Parent,  
Class Program Evaluation Form 7/1/08**

## FREE DAYS

We provided many opportunities for free visits. A total of 12,783 visitors entered at no charge.

- Open free for the public on July 4, 2007 — over 500 people in attendance
- Harvest Festival — free admission with a carved pumpkin
- Grandparents' Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day — honored parent had free admission
- Dallas, Sublimity, Stayton, and Silverton residents got in free on specific community days
- Foster Family Awareness Month — foster families got in free on May 4, 2008
- Village Build 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party — a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Outdoor Discovery Center with musical entertainment by the Marahimbas and free attendance for all on June 14, 2008
- Annual Village Awards & State of Museum Address — evening of June 18, 2008

## SPECIAL ACTIVITIES and EVENTS

A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village always strives to offer something to our community. Besides educational exhibits and programs we held a number of special programs. They included:

- **Science Fridays Summer 2007** — free drop-in program during the summer months highlighted one scientific principle each week and provided hands-on demonstrations for visitors.
- **Exhibit Touch Cart series** — free weekly drop-in on Saturdays, September 14, 2007 through March 28, 2008.
- **Pumpkin Fun Run** — 162 runners signed up for the 5K race and 26 people participated in the children's mile.
- **Harvest Festival/ Pumpkin Merriment** sponsored by Foresters — 1,028 people attended the many Harvest Festival activities inside the Village. Our display of pumpkins this year was outstanding with 458 carved and lit pumpkins.
- **Garry Krinsky's "Toying with Science"** — a performance of scientific principles at the Historic Elsinore Theatre in October. We partnered with the Elsinore and Foresters to bring Mr. Krinsky to Salem.
- **Museum's 18th Anniversary Party** — December 15, 2007.
- **New Year's Eve Family Fun** — Swashbucklin' Pirate Parrty sponsored by Les Schwab brought 902 guests (971 on site with volunteers and staff) to the Village on December 31, 2007 .

- **Martin Luther King Day** — Kaiser Permanente volunteers assisted with over 20 multicultural activities.
- **A.C. Gilbert's Birthday** — Gilbert collectors from California, Washington State, and Oregon joined local train collectors to display their collections and educated the public about A.C. Gilbert. Funded in part by Transient Occupancy Tax funds. Visitation over the two-day period included 1,300 guests, 33% of which were from out-of-town.
- **Sizzling Science Day** — a day of science activities, demonstrations, and projects. We had 14 presenters and more than 15 hands-on activities all focused on science. Presenters joined us from Willamette University and Oregon State University. We held a science fair for students and any child entering a science project was admitted to the museum free.
- **Leap Day Activities** — visitors participated in crafts and activities celebrating Leap Day. Visitors with a birthday of February 29 received free admission.
- **Discover Your Smile Photo contest** — in partnership with Stalnaker Photo Studios was held March 24 – 28, 2008.
- **Pet Friends & Animal Care series** — a free drop-in series in partnership with the Willamette Humane Society was offered April 4 through May 16, 2008.
- **No TV Week Celebration Evening** — the museum offered extended evening hours with TV alternative activities for the entire family on April 25, 2008.
- **Evening in Garden** — an evening event at Mission Mill on May 31. Over 80 people enjoyed wine, desert, live jazz, and plant sales! It was a great way to kick off the Garden Tour. Green Thumb Landscaping was the premier sponsor.
- **Annual Garden Tour and Plant Sale** — a self-guided tour of private gardens in the Macleay area during this two-day event in June with a plant sale at Mission Mill. Pioneer Trust Bank was the presenting sponsor with an additional sponsorship from Wells Fargo Insurance, Double Q Printing, and In House Graphics. Roth's Friendly Family Markets sold tickets and helped to promote the event once again.
- **Business Kids** — a program for 10 – 12-year-olds aimed at teaching kids how to run a business and give back to the community started June 19, 2008.
- **Silly Summer Days** — weekly free drop-in event on Fridays, June 20 - 27, 2008.
- **Eric Carle's Birthday** — free drop-in event celebrating award-winning children's author on his birthday, June 25, 2008.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteer hours totaled 5,500 for the year. At the current value for volunteer time (\$19.51 per hour in 2007), this equates to \$107,305 in voluntary contributions!

We were honored to work with over 200 people and many service organizations and groups such as the Salem Realtors Association, Rotary groups, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Foresters, Wachovia, Home Depot, Willamette University, Tokyo International, Marion County Juvenile Department, and high school honor societies and Key Clubs. Key Club students from North and South High Schools along with honor society students from McNary High School volunteered to help out in classes and workshops over spring break week.

We had a Chamber Leadership Youth representative Morgan Starnes, participate in our Board meetings.

**Love new exhibits — this is the one place  
in Salem my kids wanted to come.  
— Visitor, Alaska**

## **PROMOTIONS**

We had a fantastic year promoting the museum. We received over \$22,000 in a variety of in-kind advertising. In addition, we received 635 column inches in press coverage in the *Statesman Journal*. The value of this ad space is \$32,678.30 (calculated at the bulk weekday/weekend advertising rates).

Readers of *Salem Monthly* voted A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village as Best Kid's Entertainment in Salem for the fourth year in a row.

Village staff and volunteers were present at 15 promotional events, including Oregon Gardens Earth Day Celebration, World Beat Festival, Salem Saturday Market, Salem Public Market, Art Fair, City of Salem Public Works Day, West Salem Health Fair, and more.

We increased marketing opportunities to Hispanic community by coordinating ad placement in the Hispanic Yellow Pages, having a Spanish-language brochure created, and Spanish content placed on the website.

Our website attracted 34,714 unique visitors since August 21, 2007, when analytics were installed. We averaged 110 unique visitors per day.

**I have been coming here since I was five. I  
am now 18 and still love it.  
— Visitor, Salem**

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (select)

The Village is a member of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, Art Smart, the Association of Children’s Museums, Association of Science and Technology Centers, Mid-Valley Development Professionals, and Mid Valley Volunteer Mangers Association. Staff is involved in other organizations such as Salem Rotary.

This year we collected food and monetary donations for Marion-Polk Foodshare through the Rotary food drive. Staff also volunteered at Marion-Polk Foodshare to re-package frozen vegetables.

The Village also maintains partnerships with several cultural organizations in Salem. Last fall, we partnered with the Historic Elsinore Theatre and Foresters to bring Garry Krinsky’s “Toying with Science” to Salem after being cancelled due to weather the previous year. Staff and Board volunteered at Mission Mill’s “Magic at the Mill,” and in return Mission Mill allowed us to use their grounds (and their staff time) for our annual Plant Sale. A.C. Gilbert’s Discovery Village volunteers staffed the gates for one day of the World Beat Festival, a portion of which was returned back to the Village.

***A must when grandkids come to visit.*  
— Visitor, Burbank, CA**

### PERSONNEL AND BOARD

An eight to twelve member Board of Directors governs A.C. Gilbert’s Discovery Village. The professional staff includes five full-time staff and approximately twenty-five part-time staff.

#### Board Members for the 2007-2008 fiscal year were:

Cathy Crocker, Past President	Juli Burchard
Jerry Miller, President	Mary Anne Schaap
Rachel Stucky, Vice President	GwenEllyn Anderson
Dwane Brenneman, Treasurer	Debra Edwards
Shannon Martinez, Secretary	Don Lew
Joanie Hayward (part year)	

#### Core Staff included:

Pamela Vorachek, Executive Director

Kim Baldwin, Assistant Director  
Jennifer Gibson-Millis, Director of Education (July-November)  
Sylvia Halsey, Director of Education (November-June)  
Stacy Higby, Education Coordinator  
Teresa Worcester, Facilities Director  
Amy Vandegrift, Director of Volunteers and Special Events (July- December)  
Tina Rutland, Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator (February-June)  
Deana Muriset, Visitor Services Manager

**Enjoyable — entertained my 6-year-old  
and me at the same time.  
— Visitor, Salem**