

**Kronkosky Charitable Foundation
Roundtable Discussion**

Topic: San Antonio Museums

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Participants

Invited Agency Representatives

Lila Cockrell	Director of Civic and Community Affairs	San Antonio Museum of Art
Gloria Duke-Richter	President	San Antonio Botanical Society
Linda Johnson	President, Executive Director	Witte Museum
Gary Scott	Executive Director	San Antonio Museum of Art
Chris Sinnick	Executive Director	Children s Museum

Foundation Staff and Trustees

Palmer Moe	Executive Director
Megan Kromer	Director of Programs and Evaluation
Michael Bacon	Grants Manager
Mark Carmona	Grants Manager
Liz Ostendorf	Student Intern

Overview of Museums

Children s Museum

Mission: To teach a love of learning and to enhance the educational resources offered to children.

Attendance

-95,000 people in 1997

44% school children, equally distributed among school districts

Walk—in traffic is primarily from the North and West sides of San Antonio.

-Goal: 150,000 to 200,000 per year.

This goal is based on the maximum capacity of children at one time (250 children). The noise level primarily determines this restriction.

It will be possible to meet this goal once the basement construction is completed.

-The museum has a policy not to turn anyone away at the door; therefore there are a number of scholarship and special attendance mechanisms.

1. City Kids Scholarship Fund children or families can apply for reduced or free admission packages. These scholarships are provided by individual and foundations donations.
2. Sharing Memberships a family pays for their own membership and sponsors a second family.
3. Social Services organizations are given free passes
 - a. Big Brothers-Big Sisters
 - b. SAMM Shelter

Facilities

-Currently, there are 16,000 square feet developed containing 80 exhibits which are all primarily hands-on.

-The completion of renovation on the basement will add 9,000 square feet.

There is a theater, described as a mini-Majestic, planned for this area.

-In addition to the basement, there is also the opportunity to build an additional floor to increase the available space.

-The building is currently being leased with an option to buy. This option expires in 2000.

-The museum is located on an area of Houston Street currently in the process of new development to increase its retail, entertainment and restaurant business. Hopefully this will also increase walk-in attendance at the museum.

Interaction with Children

-There is a curriculum package available to teachers before coming to the museum based on the Texas Education Association's standards set per grade level and unit of study. This package provides an opportunity for the children to learn beforehand, experience the museum, and complete follow up work in the classroom.

-Scholar s in Residence Program

- Established by a grant from the Ellisin Foundation.
- The first project was for a fourth grade class to attend school at the museum for a semester. The project was enormously successful in the eyes of the children, parents, and teacher.
- Currently there are second grade classes, which attend the program for two-week periods. The time is limited because of the shorter attention span and the large cost of housing the children for the entire semester.

San Antonio Botanical Garden Society

Mission: To be a support group for the Botanical Gardens in terms of research, increasing public awareness, and financial support.

Attendance

-97,906 in 1997 (13,275 at special events)

1. 26.6% school children

All third graders in Bexar County visit the Gardens as part of the curriculum

2. There are an equal number of instate and out-of-state visitors
3. Visitors described as snowbirds, young mothers, and organized tour groups.

-Capacity: 500,000 visitors per year.

Facilities

-The City of San Antonio owns the land and the garden staff are city employees. The Society however has made the majority of the capital investments. The relationship with the city has improved over the last few years, but it is still not described as a good one.

-There are four regional areas of the Gardens that are cultivated to represent the diversity of Texas.

-The exhibits generally change four times per year, although there are some static exhibits, which are meant to serve as an historical reference and backdrop.

-The Conservatory houses five different rooms each with a different type of plant material. One room houses an epifact tree designed by a member of the staff. Currently, they are working to put a waterfall into this exhibit.

-The Teen Garden is currently 33 acres; they are in the process of trying to acquire 7 acres.

Interaction with Community

-Children s Programs

1. Teen Garden

It is based on an economic self-sufficiency model. The teens grow and sell their produce to Whole Foods and local restaurants. The profit goes to purchase seeds for the next year and to a scholarship fund for graduating gardeners. The first recipient is now at SAC.

2. Extended Learning Program

Conducted three times per year to serve 125 children per session. This is a larger lesson on a selected topic.

3. Girl Scout Program

Developed to help San Antonio area Girl Scouts (most of whom are from low-income and economically disadvantaged areas) to earn five badges. The five badges cover a wide spectrum of areas and provide the opportunity for girls to see agriculture in both cultured and primitive environments.

4. Burnet Elementary School Program

Children from housing areas around this school are taken to the Gardens for an educational experience that also serves to get them out of the housing project for a time.

-Marketing

1. The Gardens participated in the Hidden Treasures program last year and offered a packet of wildflower seeds as the treasure. More publicity is expected this year to make the program more successful.
2. Marketing efforts have been increased, from almost nothing, recently. Summer events are being publicized and are to be held in the evening, which increases attendance because of the cooler weather and the number of families able to attend.

Current Issue

-The windows on the Conservatory are continually being broken by people who drive by on Funston Street. Ninety-six windows are broken currently at a replacement cost of \$1000 per window. This is a yearly recurrence. Consequently, efforts are being made to negotiate with the people who live on the street to acquire the remaining properties so that the traffic on the street can be restricted.

San Antonio Museum of Art

It is the only comprehensive art museum in San Antonio.

Attendance

-100,653 in 1997 (15,000 at special events)

- 25% school children; 16,550 scheduled, guided tours for children
- All fifth and sixth graders visit the museum as a part of Texas world and American histories curriculum.

-Received the Lila Wallace Reader s Digest Fund Grant to increase attendance among members of the Hispanic community at the museum. This is expected to bring about a gradual increase in attendance.

-Capacity: 500,000 with all exhibits open. The number of school children is limited to approximately the current level because of the noise level and time restrictions of the school year.

Facilities

-The museum is a privately owned facility and collection.

-There are four curatorial departments, staffed with 50 people when the museum is at full speed.

-The strengths of the museum lie in the:

1. Ancient art collection, including Egyptian, Greek and Roman works, the
2. Asian collection, and the
3. Latin American Art collection. The museum is currently in the process of building a Latin American Art Center that will have pieces from pre-Colombian periods to present day.

Interaction with Community

-Children s Programs

1. Artists in Residence Programs
Artists work with children both in the museum and in the classroom
2. Docents to lecture at middle schools
They go into the schools to speak about special exhibits and parts of the permanent collection.
3. Teacher s packets for special exhibits

Witte Museum

Established as the first public museum in San Antonio 72 years ago.

Attendance

-279,139 in 1997

53.4% school children

-Capacity: 1,980,000 (Figure came from the Director of Visitor Services, who said that they can admit 550 per hour with the Treehouse.)

-Special exhibits are a big draw for the Witte but this means that the revenue of these exhibits must be shared with the special exhibition, thus decreasing the gross profits. Permanent exhibits such as the Treehouse or an Imax theater remove this profit loss.

Facilities

-The Witte is a general museum encompassing history, science, and Texas art.

-The Treehouse was built recently and has increased attendance dramatically. The city has a lease share agreement, which means that the facility belongs to the city while all of the exhibits and furnishings belong to the museum.

Information about the Industry as a Whole

Funding

Administrative Funds

These are the hardest funds to raise. Individuals and corporations are much more interested in giving to capital funds and to special events. In the past, the city has contributed funds for this area, however this has changed in recent years due to the decrease in overall funding to the arts.

Marketing

-The museum industry has not typically employed marketing strategies except for large special events. Traditionally, SA museums have followed passive marketing strategies.

-The money to fund marketing studies and advertising campaigns is hard to come by and is often the first to be cut from a budget.

-The SA Museum of Art has shown increased attendance at events, which were well marketed. The executive director said that attendance is so low because people don't know about the museum, not because they don't like it. Increased marketing would change this.

-The Witte and the Children's Museums have active marketing strategies and have individuals to fill these positions.

-The museum industry as a whole is moving toward a more visible marketing scheme.

-The best tracking of marketing dollars and attendance was for the Splendors of Mexico exhibit. The exhibit drew 270,000 people over three months. Half were from out of the city. It was calculated that these visitors generated approximately \$750 per person.

These studies are very hard and expensive to conduct and thus are not done on a widespread basis.

-Corporate sponsors of special events often provide limited funds for promoting their events.

-Only 20-30 museums currently do active market research of the 8000 museums in the US.

City Support

-The City of San Antonio is cutting the amount of funding given to the arts and is rerouting the funds, such as the Hotel-Motel Tax, which were previously earmarked for this area.

-Texas as a state ranks low in this area as compared to other states and San Antonio is low in the Texas funding arrangement. For example, the City of St Louis gives \$4 million per year to the arts. In contrast, the Cultural Tourism Board is providing a total of \$90,000.

-Museums are giving to the city in terms of development and culture, but the city is not giving back enough to sufficiently maintain these organizations.

-The corporate base in San Antonio is very small as compared with other cities our size. As a result, funding from this area is limited.

Seasonal Industry

The Witte has highest attendance in March and July.

The Botanical Gardens in late October and early April

September has shown a decrease in attendance at the Children's Museum.

A large, special exhibit can increase attendance numbers at each museum but these numbers are hard to maintain year round. This is especially true for the SA Museum of Art.

Technology

-A recent study conducted by the Witte showed that people were most interested in seeing exhibits related to future technology.

-Adding an Omnimax theater was shown to boost attendance from 350,000 to 1.1 million per year at another museum. These were previously thought of as ways of 'selling out' but now museum officials realize that they can serve as another medium for transporting people to a different environment.

Imax flat screen \$5 million

Omnimax 3-D screen \$10 million

-The status of the computers at the various museums is varied.

The Children's Museum is well equipped but lacks the money for training and software upgrades.

The Treehouse at the Witte has updated computers but the rest of the museum is lacking. Few at the Botanical Gardens or San Antonio Museum of Art have computers and few are integrated into exhibits.

-The Botanical Garden s Society would like to have interactive, touch-screen stations throughout the garden to provide additional historical and visual information to visitors.

-Most of the museums have web sites, upkeep on these sites is difficult and time consuming for individuals with other tasks. This would provide a great educational resource as well as marketing strategy is the organizations could utilize them in an effective manner.

Children s Museum	sakids.org (in the process of being developed)
San Antonio Museum of Art	samuseum.org
San Antonio Botanical Gardens	sabot.org
Witte Museum	wittemuseum.org

Evaluating the Success of Programs

-There are very few mechanisms to effectively do this because of the long-term tracking necessary for children s programs and the non-tangible impact that the fine arts can bring to people.

-Education departments offer pre and post tests for children s groups.

-Children s and teacher s comments after the visit.

-Track test groups over years to evaluate the difference the visit or visits made on education/lifestyle.

-Good attendance isn t always the best indicator of success. Often programs that influence people s life choices are deemed highly successful.

1. West Side Story (SA Muesem of Art) Exhibit by west side artist Jessie Trevino provided the opportunity to people of this area to bond in the cultural setting.
2. Children of Children (Witte Museum) Exhibit dealing with teenage pregnancy and its impact on people.
3. AIDS Exhibit (Witte Museum) Served to educate on the way the disease is spread and tried to tear down existing stereotypes of people with AIDS.
4. Guadeloupe Music Lessons (SA Museum of Art) Provides music lessons to underprivileged children
5. Outreach at the Botanical Gardens-illustrates alternative career choices for inner city youth.

Attachments

Attendance Data (Compiled by Megan Kromer)

Internet Home Page Information

Children s Museum
San Antonio Museum of Art
San Antonio Botanical Gardens
Witte Museum