

Press Release

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[Editor's note: Photo jpeg attached to e-mail; caption included below.]

DuPage Children's Museum Receives Prestigious AMM Best Practices Award

(Naperville, IL) DuPage Children's Museum's Kindergarten Mathematics Initiative (KMI) was recognized by the Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) with its 2009 Best Practices Award. This award is granted each year to a museum or cultural institution that has demonstrated leadership in the field through distinguished museum practices and/or innovative programming.

AMM Director Brian Bray said, "We were greatly impressed with the Kindergarten Math Initiative and think that it serves as an excellent model for best practices for other museums in the Midwest."

The Kindergarten Mathematics Initiative is an on-going, grant-funded program available to every kindergarten class in the public school districts in DuPage County. It provides kindergarteners with hands-on, age-appropriate experiences that help form a solid foundation for later learning. Each kindergarten class is eligible for a free field trip to the museum that also includes one of two math-related Learning Labs. All museum costs are covered by grants; transportation is the only expense assumed by the participating classes. Each child receives a Museum coupon for a free return visit.

Chris Barry, DCM School Program Manager, accepted the Best Practices Award on behalf of the Museum at the AMM annual conference, "Inspiration and Innovation: Engagement in a Changing Landscape," held in St Paul, MN on September 28, 2009.

"Four years after its inception, more than 13,400 kindergarteners later, we're still getting an overwhelmingly positive response all around – teachers appreciate the support and the children, well, it's rewarding to see the light in their eyes as they make connections while forming deeper understandings," says Chris Barry. "We're thrilled to be recognized for this ambitious program, but it wouldn't exist without the generosity of many. The donors funding this grant deserve so much recognition for extending this powerful experience to kindergarteners in our county."

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DuPage Children's Museum Best Practices Award, page 2

“This program invests in children at a critical developmental stage, making its effects transformational and long-lasting,” said Mr. Ronald McDaniel, one of the many important financial supporters of KMI. The McDaniel Foundation awarded a \$150,000 multi-year grant to the Museum to help continue the program. Mr. McDaniel recently observed students from Hawthorne Elementary School of Elmhurst during their visit to the Museum. “I witnessed children absorbing rather abstract mathematical concepts. What a fabulous foundation they’ve got now for learning math and science for years to come.”

Founded in 1927, the Association of Midwest Museums is a dynamic, non-profit membership organization that encourages professional standards for all areas of museum administration and provides cutting-edge information and resources to museums and cultural institutions in an eight-state region in the Midwest.

DuPage Children's Museum helps develop curiosity, creativity, thinking and problem solving in young children via interactive exhibits and programs that make learning fun for children and adults playing together.

The Museum is located at 301 N. Washington Street in Naperville, Illinois, a quick walk from the Naperville Metra train station. Parking is free and the building is wheelchair accessible.

DuPage Children's Museum is a top Chicago-area cultural attraction *where learning comes in to play™!* For information about hours, Museum admission and membership packages, visit www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org or call (630) 637-8000.

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MUSEUM ACKNOWLEDGED FOR
LEADERSHIP IN INNOVATIVE
PROGRAMMING IN MATHEMATICS -
Susan Broad, DuPage Children's Museum
Executive Director; and Chris Barry, School
Program Manager for the Museum, proudly
display the Association of Midwest Museum
Best Practices Award presented in recognition
of the Museum's innovative Kindergarten
Math Initiative program.



HANDS-ON, INTERACTIVE LABS - Ron McDaniel, grant donor, observed students from Hawthorne Elementary School of Elmhurst as they participated in a recent Kindergarten Mathematics Initiative Learning Lab. As part of the lab, kindergarteners manipulate common objects, giving them experience sorting, classifying and patterning.