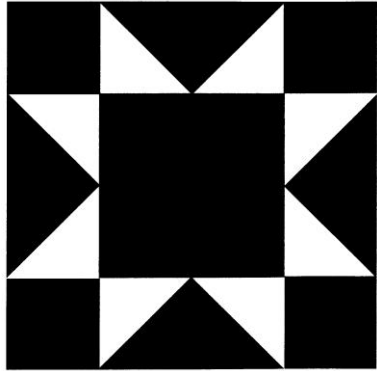


McMINN COUNTY LIVING HERITAGE MUSEUM  
EDUCATION POLICY  
2010-2013



AUTHORED AND APPROVED BY:  
MCLHM EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2010

ADOPTED BY:  
THE MCLHM BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
DATE: MARCH 9, 2010

## MISSION

The Mission of the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum (MCLHM) is to collect, preserve, and present artifacts, documents and items related to the history of McMinn County and the region for the education and enrichment of the citizens of the region and the general public.

Education is fully integrated into all areas of the Museum's planning including the 2009-2012 Long Range Plan and as a part of the Museum's recent Museum Assessment Program Report that was conducted in partnership with the American Association of Museums. Our aim for the future is to further develop access to the Museum's resources with new and better forms of interpretation and communication with the development of a new Education Policy that will expand choices. This policy sets out the strategic context, aims and objectives of the MCLHM over the next three years.

Our formal education policy is based on "Professional Standards for Museum Educators," a statement adopted by the members of the American Association of Museums Standing Professional Committee on Education. That statement is guided by the following premise:

"Every museum has an educational responsibility to the public it serves. Museums offer a unique encounter with objects and ideas for people of many ages, interests, capabilities and backgrounds. Museum education strengthens that encounter by building bridges between visitors' experiences and expectations and ideas that emanate from a museum's collections."

The period rooms and exhibits, collections and educational programming at the Living Heritage Museum provide boundless opportunities to engage the imagination and encourage visitors to "put themselves in the picture." An important shared belief, central to the Living Heritage Museum's new direction, is in the value of the experience. An active participation in history and learning through sight, sound and touch, makes visitors response to certain objects highly personal and emotional. The programs are designed to enhance and enrich each teacher's curriculum and in many cases are developed based on each individual teachers needs.

The role of this living document is to help guide and inform the practice of museum education at the Living Heritage Museum. It is intended to be used by educators, exhibit developers, curators, directors, board member and peer reviewers.

## AUDIENCES

Priority audiences for the education program include students that are pre-college (K-12), an age group that the MCLHM can grow the fastest and progressively add more programs for other age groups. As a whole, the education program of the Museum serves the following groups:

- Pre-college groups (K-12) which include:
  - School field trips
    - Hands-on and hands-off exhibitions, pre- and post visit activities, Traveling Trunks and programs; all aligned with Tennessee State Teaching Standards
  - Off-site programs
    - Visits to schools, information booths at community venues and rental programs in which Traveling Trunks and educational programs are sent to schools in McMinn County

- After school students
  - Hands-on and hands-off exhibitions, pre- and post visit activities, Traveling Trunks and programs; all aligned with Tennessee State Teaching Standards
- Recreation groups
  - Lectures, workshops, demonstrations and special events
- Home schooled students
  - Hands-on and hands-off exhibitions, online pre- and post visits activities; all aligned with Tennessee State Teaching Standards
- Adult and Senior citizen groups
  - Lectures, workshops, demonstrations, special events and volunteer opportunities
- Tennessee Wesleyan College students, faculty and staff
  - Lectures, workshops, demonstrations, special events and volunteer opportunities
- Families
  - Hands-on exhibitions, special children’s events and workshops
- Lower income students throughout McMinn County
  - Due to our partnership with the Athens City School District and the McMinn County School District which allows us to offer free programming for all their respective students and teachers

## **MUSEUM RESOURCES**

The MCLHM resources include:

- Developing and maintaining a teaching collection, which can be used by students and visitors composed of unprovenanced, duplicate or lesser quality objects
- Continuing to involve several staff members directly in educational activities such as the Curator of Collections and Exhibits, the Executive Director and the Education Committee, which is made up of current and retired educators and community scholars
- Working to develop education support staff (i.e. interns, volunteers)
- Providing equipments, offices, facilities and storage space for education programs
- Working to develop additional funding to develop educational exhibitions and programs for the public

## **TYPES OF PROGRAMS**

Priorities include exhibitions, museum-based school and group programs which are curriculum-centered.

The MCLHM plans and implements:

- Exhibitions and displays
- Museum-based programs, activities for schools and other groups centering on the themes and related curricula of particular exhibitions, including outreach programs to school children that are aligned with Tennessee State Teaching Standards
- Printed information and training to teachers

- Instruction and training for college students, interns, other Tennessee Wesleyan College students and volunteers
- Information services to the community about the Museum and its exhibits
- Identification of collections to visitors

## **ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE MUSEUM**

Because of the importance of education to the Museum’s mission, it is of primary importance in exhibition planning and design. The determination of targeted audiences and strategies to appeal to a variety of learning styles and reflecting different theories of learning are education related aspects of exhibition development.

- The Executive Director works with the Education Committee and is responsible for marketing the Museum based and outreach education programs, including brochures, posters and press releases
- The Curator of Collections and Exhibits is responsible for planning and developing the content of exhibits that are curriculum-based and aligned with Tennessee State Teaching Standards
- The Education Committee is involved with developing publications, materials such as brochures or other printed pieces and producing materials for teachers
- The Coordinator of Visitor Services is responsible for volunteer training, scheduling all group visits and working with the Curator of Collections and Exhibits to develop outreach programs for school groups

## **LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**

The Museum’s long term objectives over the next three years (2010-2013) include:

- Establishing a coordinated education policy to ensure that proposed educational programs are evaluated by the Education Committee in conjunction with the area school districts and are developed with their input to create mutually beneficial programs that match the needs of everyone
- Creating a stimulating learning environment that encourages persons of all ages to participate in rewarding self-directed learning experiences designed to inspire lifelong learning through different opportunities for visitors of all ages and abilities
- Providing the most up-to-date and accurate information on cultural history in combination with representative artifacts
- Providing cognitive, affective social learning experiences using real objects when possible
- Orienting museum visitors to McMinn County and East Tennessee
- Building on visitors of all ages and nationalities

## **ACTION PLAN**

The McMinn County Living Heritage Museum will:

- Improve organization of exhibits, teaching collection and materials to align with Tennessee State Teaching Standards

- Continue to expand public relations and marketing activities to increase public awareness
- Contact and work with education both pre-college (K-12) and college to develop new and expanded uses of the Museum exhibitions and programs for students.
  - Leverage the Museum’s current assets, concentrating on reaching more students/teachers with existing curricula/programs, then progressively developing more options
- Seek support for expanded outreach programs to more school and community based youth groups
- Identify minority contacts among the Museum’s varied audiences
- Explore potential funding sources-foundation grants and corporate sponsors to underwrite specific programs to ensure equal access
  - Develop position of Education Program Coordinator, either as a paid position or as an internship

### **EVALUATION AND REVIEW: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2010-2013**

This plan will be subject to an annual report and evaluation. Objective will be reviewed at this time and new objectives will be set for the next year. The policy as a whole will be reviewed every three years.

- Initiate a strong marketing program to inform area teachers of the MCLHM’s offerings increasing the number of students served by 15% over the next three years
  - Market to teachers with the promise of satisfying Tennessee State Teaching Standards
  - Institute a teacher referral program, providing incentive for teachers to recommend the MCLHM for field trips to their colleagues
  - Provide incentives for participating students to return to the MCLHM with their parents/families
  - Increase the number of students served in McMinn County schools through the increased promotion of the “Museum in the Classroom” providing teachers with a Museum Speakers Pool that can discuss any number of topics in their classroom
  - Increase the distribution of the “Traveling Trunks” by actively marketing to schools
  - Include curricula on the MCLHM website
  - Establish summer teacher training workshops
  - Regularly solicit feed back from teachers regarding their needs
  - Meet annually with area school districts to confirm education priorities and opportunities
- Organize an effective public relation campaign aimed at giving media exposure to the MCLHM education programs
  - Arrange at least one photo opportunity per quarter featuring school children interacting with the MCLHM collections/programs
  - Create a list of potential educational stories to pitch to the media.
  - Create and ongoing education feature in the MCLHM newsletter
  - Promote the Museum on various social networking sites (i.e. Facebook)
- Develop position of Education Program Coordinator, either as a paid position or as an internship
  - Offer hands-on opportunities to pre-service teachers, drawing from Tennessee Wesleyan College to expand the pool of docents who are specifically trained to lead student tours. Begin using them as tour guides versus staff