



## 2018 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Bronx Children's Museum's educational programs:

- Are developed, tailored, and created in the Bronx community with the child *and* the caregiver in mind
- Will inform the development of exhibits in our new building, opening in late 2019
- Promote stewardship of the planet and healthful living
- Use the Bronx as our museum and laboratory
- Inspire children and caregivers to dream, create and physically extend their experiences within the Museum to the outside and into their neighborhoods in the Bronx
- Are educationally based, culturally inclusive and encourage creativity and self-determination
- Provide educational and resource materials that relate to the subject and provide related information to caregivers

### PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Bronx Children's Museum (BxCM or Museum) relies on children's natural curiosity and facilitates each child's learning through The Inquiry Method, an interactive "hands-on" process in which materials are made available to manipulate and explore, and which allows children to discover for themselves the answers to questions they may have. BxCM focuses on STEAM-based curriculums, geared to children from pre-K through 3rd grade, while also providing participatory opportunities for English Language Learners and children with developmental challenges as part of our universal design for learning along this continuum. All educational objectives are aligned with Common Core State Standards.

### METHODS OF OUTREACH

As we look forward to the opening of our permanent facility in late 2018, BxCM concentrates on bringing arts and science programs to our constituents in their own neighborhoods. Our "Museum on the Go" bus brings our mobile exhibit to schools, community centers and events throughout the Bronx. BxCM provides both in-school and after-school programs, field trips and arts-centered activities at public events, including fairs, festivals and parades. BxCM also offers professional development sessions to teachers and childcare professionals.

### OUR NEWEST INITIATIVE

#### **Art Builds Community (ABC) with Little Friends of the Museum**

In order to ensure that both local artists and Bronx children are integral to the design and creation of the BxCM facility, the Museum recently gave birth to the ABC initiative. The end result of ABC will be the creation of up to six site-specific fine art installations in the museum's space once it opens. By infusing our building space with art and artistic collaboration rooted in the borough, BxCM will uniquely represent the Bronx and the population we will most immediately serve. A key component of ABC is the launch of **Little Friends of the Museum**, which will partner with up to 25 Bronx children, two lead Museum teaching artists, ABC-selected fine artists, and our new exhibit designers, Argyle and Potion. Children will be given a behind-the-scenes understanding of what a children's museum is from soup to nuts, and the opportunity to co-create site-specific installations with local artists. It will expose the children to the professional art world, allow them to deepen their understanding of what is artistic expression, and include field trips to museums and a studio especially designed for ABC artists to create their work. Importantly they will be able to offer their child-expert input to those prototyping art installations and interactive exhibits, allowing artists and exhibit designers to benefit from a child's perspective and children to become active participants in the design of the museum while strengthening their voice.

## **ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### **1. Waters On the Go! (WOTG)**

Waters on the Go! is our third mobile interactive environmental science exhibit, installed in a retrofitted school bus, designed to help pre-K through 3rd grade teachers supplement their science and social studies lessons. Outfitted with dioramas and authentic sounds of the habitats found along the Bronx River, Orchard Beach, and Pelham Bay Park, WOTG educates children about the ecology and natural history of the Bronx waterways, and about the historical significance of the Native American Siwanoy, who can be referred to as the first Bronx natives and environmentalists.

BxCM guides and educators visit participating schools before the bus arrives to orient teachers and to ensure maximum integration of the WOTG program into current lesson plans. Led by a team of these guides, small groups of children participate in each of three learning sessions about the flora and fauna of the waterways, the water cycle, and the archaeological history of the Siwanoy. As one group tours the WOTG exhibit on the bus, the other groups see, touch and examine animal pelts and insect specimens in the accompanying suitcase exhibit. Participating classes are given activity plans, posters, maps, books and games as leave-behinds. BxCM educators also conduct pre- and post-visit assessments. For in-depth study, BxCM offers additional activities such as field trips to the river, park, and beach. WOTG is also designed as a one-day experience (brought with and without the bus) for general audiences at parks, festivals, shelters, parades, etc. and is often accompanied by arts-related activities. The bus exhibit is always our most popular program, and last school year, the bus visited 22 schools and 31 public festivals (17 with the bus) and was experienced by a total of 8,421 children and caregivers.

### **2. Little Friends of the High Bridge (LFHB)**

Little Friends of the High Bridge is an expansion of Rivers On the Go! that was inspired by the restoration and reopening of the High Bridge, the city's oldest standing bridge, which was built in 1848 as an aqueduct. Incorporating STEAM and history elements into the program, LFHB used the bus exhibit (which included a replica of the bridge) and suitcase exhibits to educate children about the ecosystem of the Harlem River. It also makes use of a book written and published expressly for the program, *The Lowdown on the High Bridge: The Story of How New York City Got Its Water*, by Sonia Manzano (also known as "Maria" from *Sesame Street*). BxCM and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection have donated the book to more than 5,000 children in the Highbridge and Washington Heights neighborhoods in the last two years. The target audience for this program is pre-K through 3rd grade students living in the Highbridge neighborhood, and their caregivers and teachers. In 2016-2017, we offered monthly school visits to nine schools and 687 children and customized arts experiences and tours of the High Bridge.

### **3. Little Friends of the River (LFR)**

Geared specifically for pre-school students and soon to be offered to children in Kindergarten, LFR is a partnership with Trout in the Classroom, a conservation-oriented, environmental education program for elementary through high school students, run with the support and cooperation of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. Students raise trout from eggs and ultimately release them into approved, cold-water streams and lakes. BxCM created an early-childhood professional development model of the program called Little Friends of the River, complete with lesson plans and a list of books, designed for an entire school year's activities. We also help participating schools purchase needed equipment, offer professional development, provide technical assistance and offer monthly classroom visits. From 2016-2017, the Museum worked a total of 139 children at P.S. 314, BronxWorks, South Bronx Head Start, and Robert Magnum Early Learning Center.

### **4. Little Friends of Orchard Beach (LFOB)**

Inspired by the recent archaeological finds in Pelham Bay Park, our newest STEAM and history program highlights the flora, fauna, and Native American history of Pelham Bay Park and Orchard Beach. In addition to a visit from the new Waters On the Go! bus, students in the LFOB program receive monthly classroom visits led by Museum guides and participate in a variety of activities including readings of Lenape folktales, a microscope lab, and field trips to the park and beach. This program was piloted this year at two local schools, for a total of seven classes and 132 students, but will be expanded to four schools and approximately 400 children in 2017-2018.

## **ONGOING ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAMS**

### **1. Dream Big (DB)**

Dream Big is an afterschool arts program at P.S. 5 in Port Morris and an intensive arts enrichment program at camps in different South Bronx communities each summer. The purpose of Dream Big is to inspire children to explore and elaborate on their

grandest desires for their futures using the arts as a way to express themselves. Local teaching artists provide weekly instruction in the literary, performing or visual arts, designed to impart a sense of cultural pride, two to three days a week for up to thirty-six sessions. Each year, a different Bronx-related theme is chosen for children to explore through the arts. Dream Big Day is the culminating celebration of the summer arts enrichment component, where Bronx-born luminaries in the arts and public life interact with the children at a local college and encourage them to dream big and work hard. One of our regular visitors is Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor, who has attended all eight Dream Big Day summer celebrations. In 2017, 23 children participated in the afterschool program-and 80 children participated in the summer program at Betances.

## **2. What Is Art? (WIA)**

BxCM's artist-in-residency program is designed to bring children and local professional artists together, to expose children to the world of the professional artist with the guidance of early childhood educators. What Is Art? educates teachers and caregivers, as well as their children, about the importance of art in our lives and demonstrates how easy it is to find and experience art. For most of the children, this program offers them their first-ever visit to a museum. In addition, they are able to see their own artwork—created with artists and BxCM educators—installed and exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, BronxArtSpace and the Andrew Freedman Home. What is Art? also includes professional development training for teachers, as well as materials, books and posters, along with a multi-session art curriculum. In 2016, we worked with Masa, a local academic remediation program tailored to new immigrant Mexican families, to provide an eight-week Saturday program celebrating Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead). This coming year, we plan to work with children in our GreenArts program to create a brand new WIA program called Little Friends of the Museum in collaboration with our Arts Build Community initiative described below.

## **3. GreenArts**

The GreenArts Afterschool Program combines arts, literacy, environmental education and science in two afterschool programs for 2nd and 3rd graders at P.S. 55 and P.S. 274. The program at P.S. 274 is a collaboration with nearby Roberto Clemente State Park. It helps children make the connection between health, nutrition, the environment, conservation and sustainability, and seeks to inspire each child, through the arts, to live a healthful lifestyle and to improve his or her community and the planet. At P.S. 55, thirty-five children from Morrisania conduct their own in-school health-awareness campaign using the arts as their main vehicle and children write letters to local grocery stores and elected officials advocating for healthier foods in their community, which is considered a food desert. Children also participate in an end-of-year parade as part of the Bronx Day Parade to distribute healthy foods to the community. At Roberto Clemente State Park, sixty children from P.S. 274 who live in Morris Heights studied local birds and created whimsical birdhouses to display in the park.

## **4. ArtSpot**

ArtSpot is a summer weekend pop-up arts program designed especially for the children from the NYC Housing Authority's Mitchel Houses in Mott Haven, in cooperation with the Mitchel Tenants Association. This past year's theme was aimed at honoring the history of the Native American Siwanoy tribe that used to reside in the Bronx. Local teaching artists provide arts experiences in a festival-like environment for four weekends at different activity stations: music (drumming, song-writing and performance), dance, visual arts (mural-making, ceramics, weaving and sculpting) and experimenting with water. The program concludes with a culminating celebration where the children display and perform their artistic creations for family and friends. An average of sixty-eight children and caregivers participated in ArtSpot each week during summer 2016.

## **5. Rivers On the Go! Unity Program (ROG Unity)**

Through fine arts classes, guest speakers, field trips and a culminating art exhibition for parents and caregivers, students at P.S. 47 and P.S. 49 how all cultures are connected to the environment. By using the history of the Bronx River and the Native Americans in the Bronx as a starting point, students investigated and researched how people from their native countries connect with nature. Students shared their research with classmates and used this knowledge as inspiration for both collaborative and individual artwork, which was then displayed at an ending celebration for teachers, students and caregivers. The main goal of this program is for students (most of whom are from immigrant families) to feel proud of their cultural roots and understand that art, nature and water connect all cultures together. A total of 104 children participated last school year, which BxCM is hoping to continue if Cultural Immigrant Initiative discretionary funds are raised from the City Council.