

COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION
⇒ PROJECT ⇐



During the past year the Denver Museum of Nature & Science engaged in deep community work to involve and integrate our community in helping to shape the museum of the future. A team – The Natural World of Colorado – led this work in hopes of co-creating a mission with our communities that would guide our projects moving forward.

We worked with a local firm, Kebaya Consulting, to help us craft a plan.

WE WANTED TO KNOW:

How can the Museum support all communities throughout Metro Denver by contributing to their experiences and enjoyment of nature and science?

Through the process we met with community groups across Denver, talked with our members, and engaged with staff. The Museum listened and learned. What we heard, saw, and dreamed has been transformational. Our co-authored mission statement is:

Collaborate with communities to support and create diverse and meaningful experiences around exploration of the natural world, both within and beyond the Museum's walls.

This mission statement compliments a foundational list of emerging themes from our various work with the community that will lead our work – Museum-wide – going forward.

HERE'S HOW WE DID IT!



Building a Community Team

We started with a team of Museum staff and created a community map to help us identify the community partners and communities we hoped to connect with. Through this work we connected with a wonderful and diverse group of 20 community volunteers who engaged as Community Collaboration Project Team members of the Museum's first Community Collaboration Project.

Community Collaboration Project Team Members

J.R. Lapierre
Lincoln Hills Cares

Salvador Carrera
DPS -Multicultural Services Office

Violeta Garcia
STEM Learning by Design

Elena Sandoval Lucero
Community College of Aurora

Paul Biedenbender
Christ Lutheran Church

Will Chan
Denver Public Library

Nicanor Diaz
Denver Public Library

Chris Duran
Adult Learning Center

Carla Kaplan Gomez
Mi Casa

Leesly Leon
City and County of Denver

Rowena Alegria
Agency for Human Rights & Community Partnerships | City and County of Denver

Tariana Navas - Nieves
Cultural Affairs Denver Arts & Venues,
City and County of Denver

Erin Yoshimura
Empowerful Changes

Matt Dyer
Clinica Tepeyac

Maruca Salazar
Museo de las Americas

Jose Silva
Renewal Academy

Chris Wanifuchi
Asian Pacific
Development Center

LaToya Petty
Families Forward

Maria Handley
Generation Latino



GETTING OUT AND TALKING

The Community Collaboration Project Team got to work interviewing family members, friends, and co-workers. We conducted over 50 interviews with family, friends, neighbors, Museum members, and co-workers. We hosted 9 community conversations in and around the city, and we had several community conversations with Museum staff and volunteers which helped us not only get valuable information but raise awareness and build momentum for this project.

MAKING MEANING

After getting out into various communities the Community Collaboration Project Team came back together to make meaning of all that we had heard. Together, and led by the Kebaya team, we identified several key themes, or “stepping stones to the future”:

- Curiosity
- Exploration inspires discovery
- Choose your own adventure
- Hands on museum experience (HOME)
- Quality time across generations
- Serving and engaging visitors

We did this by learning to “listen for values.” We used active listening techniques to listen to the stories and distill what made those moments so memorable.

Community Collaboration Project – Summit

On February 11, 2017 the Museum hosted our culminating event for this project – the Community Collaboration Project Summit! This was an opportunity to throw our doors open to community members and hear, first hand, if what we had learned over the past 6 months resonated. And it did!

Together with 47 community members, staff, and Museum members and 20 children we spent a day together crafting the guide posts for our mission statement.

Crafting the mission for the work of the Natural World of Colorado team:

The Community Collaboration Project Team came together once again after the Summit to meaningfully summarize the work of the larger community into a mission statement for the Natural World of Colorado team.

DMNS collaborates with communities to support and create diverse and meaningful experiences around exploration of the natural world, both beyond and within the Museum's walls.

We know that these conversations and this work will have impacts far beyond the Natural World of Colorado team, in fact this work already has! Our communities' contributions have and will impact everything that we do as a Museum.

TIPS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING:

- Put a spotlight on your partner. Be genuinely curious about their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Please don't give your opinion or tell your own story during their interview.
- Probe to learn more. You might say: Tell me more. Or Why was that important? Or What was your contribution?

