“Could I have the big glue gun?”

Our role at Portland Children’s Museum is to create a space where children’s ideas and voices are heard, respected, and amplified. When children step into the Museum and are given the freedom and the materials to investigate, their natural creativity and problem-solving skills are strengthened. One of our young guests faced a challenge in our Maker Studio when he needed to use a new tool to complete his project. He knew he had to ask a staff member for the tool, but he had never spoken a full sentence in English before. That day, for the first time, he did. “Could I have the big glue gun?” he asked.
WE AMPLIFY CHILDREN’S VOICES

IN THE CLASSROOM

I’m hoping that once our message is in the world, people will see that everyone has a right to have love.

– Sebastian, age 9

From an early age, children begin to understand that the world is large, complicated, and problematic. Knowing that children recognize what is wrong, we chose to help Opal School students focus on what is possible, nurturing their sense of agency and empathy. In that spirit, the students joined the National School Walkout by designing their own “March for Love.” By sharing their messages of love, hope, and compassion first with each other within the classroom and then outside of school walls, children learned that they can have a powerful impact on the world. As our Opal Alder classroom of 3 to 5-year-olds told us, “Love is our superpower.”
Through our participation at the Portland Pride Festival, we interacted directly with over 750 children and adults as they designed buttons expressing something important about their identities. One little girl proudly drew an image of the recent wedding ceremony of her two moms, walking away into the crowd with it pinned to her shirt. With almost 30 offsite events each year, the Museum empowers children all over the metropolitan area to voice their ideas, share their unique gifts, and proudly demonstrate who they are as individuals.

“The thread of feelings connects us all.”

– Aleeza, age 7
You can kind of go free with water.  
I kind of feel like water is unbreakable.  
Because once you put your hand in water, it keeps going.

—Lois, Age 9, Opal School

We find no better place to engage children’s creativity and spread their ideas than in our Museum exhibits. After all, the most effective children’s exhibits are informed by children themselves. In creating *The Market*, our Opal School students dreamed of illustrating the relationship between land and food; the result includes a grape arbor, apple tree, bee hive, and chicken coop. Our new water exhibit under development, *Drip City*, has involved the voices of Opal School students, Museum visitors, Native American children at Faubion School, and other diverse community members. They envisioned a Portland-inspired space accessible to all.
The most important word is ‘yet.’

–Eliana, age 4

This year, the voices of Opal students reached 1,676 educators from 32 states, five Canadian provinces, and 10 other countries who collectively influence countless children. Through our workshops, consultations, and symposium, we encouraged adults to rethink the role of school and to support young people in collaboratively and courageously envisioning the world in which they wish to live. As always, we relied on the contributions of children to inform and fortify our work, tapping into their gifts of creativity, curiosity, and empathy to evolve and strengthen our learning approach, Playful Inquiry.
I'm hoping that once our message is in the world people will see that everyone has a right to have love.

– Sebastian, age 9

The world is big and the children are a part of it. They make themselves a part of it by learning how to live, in any circumstance, from the moment they are born. Knowing children are aware of so much of what is wrong, we want to focus on what's possible—nurturing their sense of agency and empathy. In that spirit, the Opal School Students joined the National School Walkout by designing their own “March for Love”. Amplifying children's voices helps the children learn that they can do things to make the world a better place, and also supports adults to remember important things they may have forgotten.
Have you heard a child ask this question? Have you asked this question of a child in return? At Portland Children’s Museum, we want to give every child a voice—individually, and in their classroom, community, region, and world. This year, we adopted new vision and mission statements to confirm this commitment.

**OUR VISION:** We envision a world where everyone retains and values the innate curiosity, creativity, and empathy of childhood.

**OUR MISSION:** To develop innovative problem-solvers through playful learning experiences that strengthen relationships between children and their world.

Thank you for your support of our efforts to amplify children’s voices, make their ideas visible, and strengthen the bonds between them and the important people in their lives. You are one of them!

Gratefully,

Ruth G. Shelly, Executive Director
1,000
Outdoor breaks for Opal School students in rain or shine

5,662
Memberships

278,643
Visitors

34,646
Access visitors

947
Family Access Pass holders

150
New Zany Maze plants to help our garden grow

Oodles of therapy animal cuddles at low-sensory Access Play evenings
538 Miles traveled for offsite visits

813 Cups of bubble soap

134 Pumped up performances

3,275 Volunteer hours

125 Opal School students ages 3-11 who orchestrated the March for Love

25,238 Social media followers

297 Pet City population in the Clay Studio
2017-18 CONTRIBUTIONS

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SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUE

- Program & Admission Fees: 61%
- Donations: 19%
- Memberships: 16%
- Other Income: 4%

Total Revenue: $4,361,202

A full audit is available at portlandcm.org/audit
OPERATING EXPENSES

Total Expenses $4,501,778
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Forests, Rivers, and Cities
Detail from mural

–Opal School Sitka Class 2017, ages 8-10