

Great Ideas for Planning and Hosting Special Events



Why Special Events?



- offer unique programming experiences
- celebrate special occasions
- appeal to new audiences
- foster community relationships and collaborations

Special events also bring needs for



- planning
- logistical challenges
- staffing
- training
- special marketing
- new programming
- collaborations

Great Ideas for Planning and Hosting Special Events



- Michelle Kortenaar, Sciencenter, NY
- Liz Leahy, The Discovery Museums, MA,
- Becky Wolfe, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, IN
- Juliet Gray-Moliere, Brooklyn Children's Museum, NY
- Aaron Guerrero & Kevin Velasquez,
Children's Museum of Houston, TX
- Brad Herring, Museum of Life and Science, NC
- Ali Jackson, Sciencenter, NY
- Breakout into tables

Michelle Kortenaar
Director of Education
Sciencenter
Ithaca, NY





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THE Discovery Museums

Acton, Massachusetts
www.discoverymuseums.org



Elizabeth Leahey
Assistant Director of Learning Experiences
eleahey@discoverymuseums.org

Great Ideas For Planning and Hosting Special Events

Collaborating with scientists



NanoDays with Dr. Gareth McKinley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Massachusetts Archaeology Month with Dr. Suanna Selby Crowley



National Chemistry Week with Dr. Mathangi Krishnamurthy, Fitchburg State University



Olin College Engineering Discovery Team



PORTAL
to the Public

Meet the Scientists!
Portal to the Public

a national network of museums bringing scientists and the public together in face-to-face interactive programs

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Special Events for School Groups

Becky Wolfe

Why events for schools?



- Reach large number of students
- Broad content themes
- Bring in community groups
- Showcase of museum programs
- Single-day WOW presentation

Summits

- Mini-conference format
- Large presentation
- Breakout sessions
- Community exhibit hall





Holocaust Remembrance Day

- Theater production by local high school
- Table top activities around the museum
- Scheduled time in Anne Frank exhibit with additional interpretation programs
- Partnership with Bureau of Jewish Education

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Sensory Friendly Day



Background

- ▶ Exclusive event for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and sensory processing differences
- ▶ Held on days closed to the public
- ▶ Limited amount of visitors: pre- registration required



Promotion

- ▶ News alerts to local media
- ▶ Social media, e-blasts, newsletters
- ▶ Mostly digital since many attendees do not regularly visit Museum
- ▶ Future possibilities:
 - ▶ Promoting at similar events
 - ▶ Word-of-mouth through on-site specialists
 - ▶ Advertising in Sensory Friendly-focused media



Museum Transformation

- ▶ Dimmed lights
- ▶ Limiting of audio
- ▶ Extra signage
- ▶ Specially trained staff
- ▶ On-site specialists



Museum Story Guide

- ▶ Guide to help families familiarize yourself with the Museum beforehand
- ▶ Written from a child's perspective, the guides can be helpful in planning for visitors

This story will tell me what I will see and do at the Children's Museum of Houston.



When I walk into the museum, the first thing I will do is stand in line with my grownup to buy tickets. I will wait my turn and be patient.



©2012 The Children's Museum of Houston Institute for Family Learning.
Special thanks to the Westview School for their assistance in developing this tool.

Tips and Takeaways

- ▶ Give clear 1-2 step directions
- ▶ Kids with special needs love structure and routine
- ▶ Remember not to “yell” when you are talking to kids who have special needs. Some of them are very sensitive to sound.
- ▶ Don’t speak too fast. Talk slowly and pause between directions.
- ▶ Do not use sarcasm, figurative language, or jokes. Children with special needs do not usually understand this type of language and may find it offensive.
- ▶ Do not be offended if the children are not looking at you when you are speaking to them, it doesn’t mean they are not listening. Some people with Autism find it painful to look at people in the eye.

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KNOW WONDER.®

MUSEUM  of LIFE + SCIENCE

*Create a place of lifelong learning
where people, from young child to senior
citizen, embrace science as a way of knowing
about themselves, their community, and their world.*

MUSEUM OF LIFE AND SCIENCE – KNOW WONDER

- 84-acre interactive science park with over 60 species live animals
- Annual attendance is around 440,000 with about 9,800 member households



MUSEUM OF LIFE AND SCIENCE – KNOW WONDER



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IGNITE LEARNING

A \$5 membership program that provides low-income families in Durham year-round access to interactive science learning opportunities and Museum programs they otherwise would not be able to afford.



EL CENTRO HISPANO

A grassroots community based organization dedicated to strengthening the Hispanic/Latino community and improving the quality of life of Hispanic/Latino residents in Durham, Carrboro, Chapel Hill and surrounding areas.



BILINGUAL MEET A SCIENTIST

- A hands-on science event featuring bilingual scientists from around the Triangle.



BILINGUAL MEET A SCIENTIST



THANK YOU!

Brad Herring
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Lifeandscience.org

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Local Collaborations



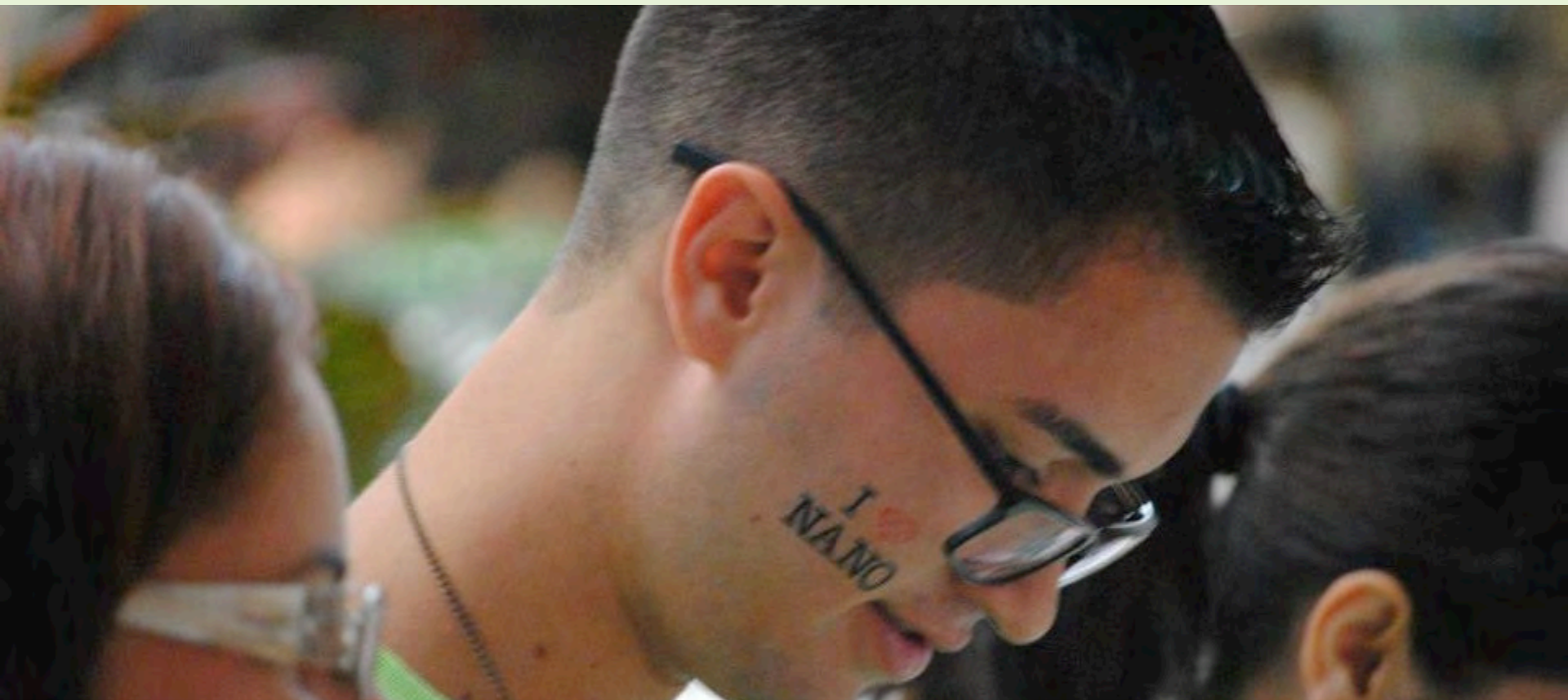
Questions & Discussion



Break out tables

- **Training volunteers fast: Michelle**
- **Collaborating with scientists: Liz**
- **Bringing in school audiences: Becky**
- **Back to school: Juliet**
- **Reaching special needs audiences: Aaron & Kevin**
- **Community collaborations & sponsors: Brad**
- **Making national events local: Ali**

Thank You



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