

SEEC Annual Report

Sept. 2011-Aug. 2012



At SEEC our ordinary is extraordinary.



Our toddlers explore the Human Origins exhibit. As we say at SEEC, we are not (only) cute, we are brave.



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Executive Director Message

It has been a busy and successful year at SEEC as we embark on our next phase of growth and opportunity. As the country begins to focus their attention on early learning SEEC is poised to contribute our unique way of educating children through our use of objects and museum experiences to this conversation.

For us, it is exciting to see the impact that museums have in the lives of our youngest learners. Not only are children exposed to art, history and science, but they are also able to gain an understanding of our global society. We look forward to what will come next for us and invite you to be part of that with us!

Highlights of the Year

The 2011-12 year was a year of change for SEEC as we moved to new spaces and a new Executive Director joined the team. The new American History site with classrooms for the three and four year old children opened on May 18 with expanded space and upgraded facilities. In addition, SEEC now has formal exhibition cases in the hallway outside the center to highlight our work for all to see. Construction for the new infant-toddler site in the National Museum of Natural History continued with a late 2012 move in date anticipated.

In late November 2011 the Board announced that Dr. Kim Kiehl would join SEEC in July as the new Executive Director following the retirement of founding director, Dr. Sharon Shaffer. The Board coordinated a farewell celebration for Dr. Shaffer in July to thank her for her many contributions to SEEC across the years.

An external evaluation of SEEC's Kindergarten stated that the program provided children with an environment "rich in experiential learning" and praised the quality of the teaching staff. "...". Their findings indicated "that students who are transitioning into a first-grade program will be appropriately prepared academically for the new challenges of first grade."

Please explore our website at www.si.edu/SEEC to learn more amazing things happening every day at SEEC.

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Outreach Highlights

In January a National Advisory Committee comprised of researchers and early childhood leaders met at the Smithsonian Institution to discuss research and practice related to early learning in museums. This meeting was funded by a Planning Grant of \$20,000 from the Smithsonian Consortia and was intended to be the first step in developing A National Symposium on Early Learning in Museums. SEEC provided leadership in this initiative, both in writing the grant proposal and planning the event.

SEEC continued to develop and grow relationships with museums, schools, and other cultural institutions through the educational outreach department. These partnerships included:

- Miami-Dade Public Schools – arts integration grant through DOE funding under magnet school grants [Florida]
- Art Institute of Chicago & Chicago Public Schools – funded by the Terra Foundation [Illinois]
- Ohr O-Keefe Museum of Art – IMLS funded student and teacher guides, and professional development for regional educators [Mississippi]
- Museum of Flight – professional development for staff [Washington]
- GAO Tiny Findings – a series of workshops for teachers [DC]
- Ball State University – a documentary film on how children acquire knowledge

SEEC also continued to offer its signature seminar *Learning through Objects: Museums and Young Children* as well as other workshops focused on early learning in museums. Visitors to SEEC included educators from across the nation and from around the world including educators from Korea, China and Sweden.



Key Accomplishments

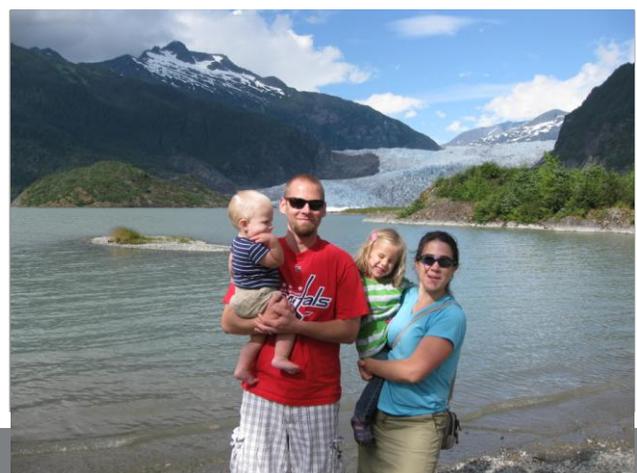
- Received reaccreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Plans for a Longitudinal Study of the SEEC program were developed during a charette led by evaluator Mary Ellen Munley and supported by Claudine Brown, the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access. The study will identify key characteristics of the SEEC program through data collected from a variety of sources with relationships to SEEC, from alumni families and SI colleagues to partners in educational outreach.
- Staff participated in and presented at a variety of outside professional development conferences including American Alliance of Museums, Bank Street, National Art Education Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- SEEC participated as a member in the RACE Exhibit Family Day and contributed to discussions about how information about race is shared with visitors. A committee of classroom teachers and museum education specialists from SEEC worked together to share ideas with the SI committee and also with the broader SEEC community

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What we believe about children and learning

- We believe each child is born a unique individual and we honor that individuality.
- We believe that, from birth, children are brave, energetic, creative, hopeful and capable.
- We believe children are open and curious explorers, capable of deep reflection.
- We honor children's questions and ideas, believing that they are capable of pursuing and representing knowledge in multiple ways.
- We believe children need to be engaged intellectually, physically and emotionally to maximize their learning.
- We believe children need repeated experiences over time to deepen their understanding of the world.
- We believe that learning is a personal search for meaning and happens best when it is intrinsically motivated.
- We believe that learning is best transferred across real life situations when there is an emotional connection built between the learner and the information.
- We believe that providing multisensory experiences opens the opportunity for more connections between the children and the information.
- We believe that learning is deeper, richer and more relevant when it moves out of the classroom and into the community on a regular basis. We believe that people make sense of their world in many ways and that museum and community resources improve the opportunity for sense making.
- We believe in sitting with questions and providing time to search for explanations. We encourage children to think deeply, often, and in new ways.
- We believe that teachers are learners too. In order to teach most effectively we believe they need to venture into unknown, and possibly uncomfortable, areas.
- We believe that risk and failure are just as important as success in learning.
- We believe in the power of shared experiences for learning. We value relationships and their role in learning.
- We believe that learning takes time.



Family Profile

The Baskette-Jones Family

SEEC has been an incredible experience for our family. It is wonderful to know that our children are cared for and nurtured, not just looked after. The teachers and other members of the staff truly love working with children and it shows. Our children are genuinely happy to see their teachers in the morning, and are just as happy to see their teachers from years past. Our daughter invited one of her teachers to her third birthday party and happily introduced her (and her family) to all the parents there.

We have two children at SEEC right now. They have such amazing adventures in and around the museums. SEEC allows so many opportunities to encourage exploration in young children. The galleries on The Mall are an extension of the classroom that no other school, even the others in DC, have access to.

The kids know the museums by name and are comfortable exploring them as well as other museums.

Amy, Chad, Margarita, and Graham

"I love that the teachers work with the children to help them learn in the way that suits them best."

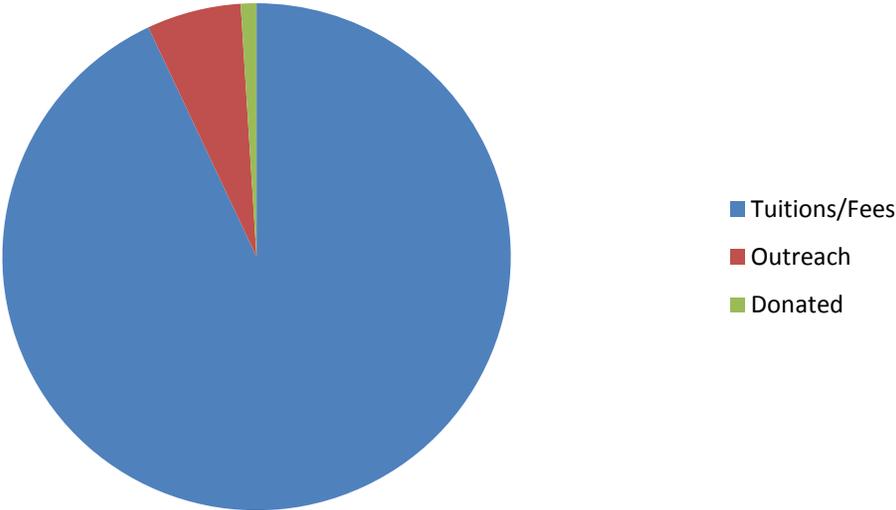
Amy Baskette-Jones

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Financial Information

Income



Expenses

