



2025

Impact Report

From Our Leadership

In 2025, Betty Brinn Children's Museum proudly celebrated 30 years of inspiring curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning through play. Since opening our doors in 1995, nearly five million children, caregivers, educators, and community members have walked through our Museum to learn, connect, and experience the joy of unstructured, hands-on play. Together, we've built a trusted community resource that has inspired generations of children and families.

This year was filled with meaningful milestones, from refreshing beloved exhibits and launching a nationally recognized Artist-in-Residence, to celebrating our inaugural Be a Kid Ball fundraising gala. At the heart of our work is our unwavering commitment to ensuring that every child has access to joyful, play-based learning experiences. In 2025, nearly one-third of the guests we served participated in our Community Access Programs, with continued growth in Access Memberships, subsidized field trips, and community outreach through our Wonder Wagon. These efforts reflect our dedication to creating welcoming and accessible opportunities for all children and families across our region.

While we honor the past 30 years of play and learning, we continue to envision what lies ahead. As our community continues to evolve, so does our vision. Through deeper community engagement, expanded accessibility initiatives, innovative exhibits and programming, and thoughtful long-term planning, we are laying the foundation for the next generation of learners.

Thank you to our donors, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners for making this milestone year possible. Whether you visited the Museum, volunteered your time, sponsored an exhibit, attended an event, or made a gift towards our mission, your generosity helped create joyful play experiences and meaningful learning opportunities for thousands of children and families.

Thank you for your important role in creating this 30 year milestone and for your ongoing partnership as we launch into the next 30 years!



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Our Mission

Through the power of play, we foster joy, confidence and curiosity in children and families, inspiring a journey of lifelong learning.



Celebrating a Milestone Year

Our 30th Anniversary: Betty Brinn Children's Museum Through the Years

Throughout 2025, we honored three decades of fostering discovery, curiosity, and creativity through the power of play. Families, supporters, and community members shared treasured memories of favorite exhibits, explored fond moments from the Museum's past, and celebrated the generations of children who have learned through play within our walls and beyond. These stories remind us that while our exhibits may evolve, our mission to inspire lifelong learning remains as meaningful today as it was 30 years ago.

During our Be a Kid Ball gala, guests took a walk down memory lane with a nostalgic showcase of fan-favorite exhibits from the Museum's first three decades. Check out a few of those memories on the right!



Encouraging Creativity Through Music: First-Ever Artist-in-Residence

We were thrilled to welcome Grammy-nominated and Milwaukee-based cellist and producer, Malik Johnson, as our first-ever Artist-in-Residence! From April-August, Malik led musical performances and interactive community conversations with guest artists, which encouraged children to dream big and express themselves creatively. Malik's residency culminated in the debut of a custom composition inspired by his time engaging with families. We invite you to enjoy his song, "Ready to Go (to Betty Brinn)" at the QR code!

We are incredibly grateful for the generous private family donor whose support made this residency possible.



Our Inaugural Be a Kid Ball Gala

In June, supporters gathered for our inaugural Be a Kid Ball fundraising gala, celebrating the transformational power of play while raising critical philanthropic support for the Museum's mission. The evening brought together 450 community leaders and champions of early childhood education, and we raised more than \$345,000 to support meaningful play experiences!

At this event, we also debuted our 30th Anniversary video, showcasing three decades of memories and milestones made possible with the help of our dedicated supporters. Check out this video at the QR code to the right!



Refreshed Spaces for Endless Discovery

Palermo's Pizzeria Exhibit Redesign

Imagination is always on the menu in this beloved space! In partnership with and generously supported by Palermo's Pizza, we reopened a fully refreshed and rebranded exhibit that encourages teamwork, problem-solving, creative thinking, and math skills through imaginative play!

Storybooks that Sparked Learning

Over the summer, *Storyland: A Trip Through Childhood Favorites™* transformed beloved children's books into immersive, hands-on experiences that inspired thousands of children and families. Thanks to generous support from Rockwell Automation and Herb Kohl Philanthropies, and in partnership with Bernie's Books, the literacy-focused exhibit invited young readers to step inside family storybooks and discover the joy of literacy through play.

The impact extended far beyond the Museum's walls as more than 5,000 students received free books and curriculum materials to continue the learning at home, while 600 children joined us on subsidized field trips. Together, these efforts fostered a love of reading, strengthened early literacy skills, and created meaningful connections.

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Pocket Park Reimagined

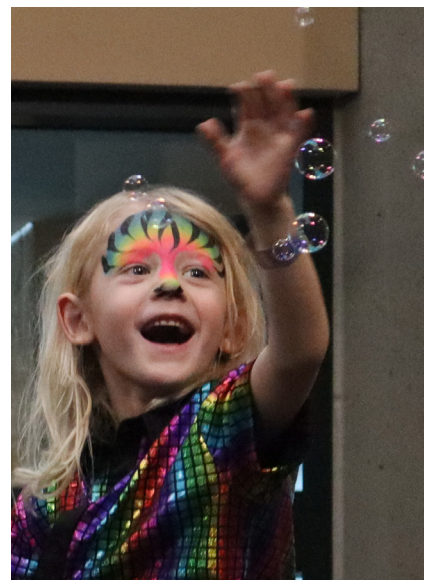
Thanks to the generous support of MHS Health Wisconsin, our Pocket Park exhibit was beautifully reimagined into the Tooth Fairy Garden, a new space designed to promote health and wellness for children ages 0 to 4 and their caregivers. This refreshed exhibit combines imaginative play with age-appropriate lessons that encourage healthy habits and early dental care. The Tooth Fairy Garden invites caregivers and children to slow down, connect, and build healthy habits together through all-family interactions.



Looking Ahead: Listening, Learning, & Leading

As we look ahead to the next 30 years, we are committed to deepening our understanding of the evolving needs of children and families in our community and across our region. Through extensive and ongoing community engagement efforts launched in 2025 and gathering input from more than 700 individuals, we are building a roadmap that is helping to shape the Museum's future. By listening to families, educators, community leaders, and partner organizations, we have worked to identify opportunities to expand our impact and ensure the Betty Brinn Children's Museum continues to serve as an essential resource for generations to come. These conversations helped inform a broader vision for the Museum's future and laid the groundwork for the Museum's strategic Master Planning work. Together, these efforts reinforce our role as both a trusted educational institution and a leading advocate for the critical role of play in early childhood development.

More Meaningful Moments



Spiderman at the Museum

We kicked off the new year by hosting a fan-favorite superhero: Spiderman! Families enjoyed meeting Spiderman while exploring the science behind web-swinging through interactive programming.



Bedtime at Betty Brinn

At our signature member event, families enjoyed an after-hours pajama party with special bedtime-themed programming, a sleepy-time scavenger hunt, and the chance to make their own bedtime stories, all while enjoying pizza donated by Palermo's and exclusive access to play at the Museum.

Cuddle Clinic

A Pet Vet takeover! Children experienced a day of animal care and learning from real veterinarians. Families brought stuffies for a check-up, created personalized collars, made their own animal x-ray art, and interacted with therapy animals. Special thanks to NVA for their partnership and sponsorship of this event.

A New Train Adventure

This custom-built wooden train track offers a collaborative play experience beyond the traditional train table and promotes STEAM learning in a creative setting. This new train table was built and generously donated by wTrak Modular Wooden Railway.

Little Sprouts Lab

We launched this new program, which allows children to explore hands-on activities connecting science, art, nature, and healthy eating. Featuring our hydroponic Fork Farms garden, children learn about planting, harvesting, the environment, and creativity! Little Sprouts Lab is sponsored by the Lutz Family Foundation.

PNC Mobile Learning Adventure

In partnership with PNC, we welcomed this traveling exhibit that teaches young children and families how to turn everyday moments into interactive learning opportunities.

Betty BOO's Spooktacular

Children and families enjoyed a fright-free Halloween celebration with spooky-silly story times, a reptile and insect meet-and-greet, a monster mash dance party, and Halloween-themed Be a Maker projects.

Engineer Someday

Author Jay Flores joined us on his book tour for Engineer Someday: A Bilingual STEM Adventure. Children engaged in bilingual story time, interactive science experiments, and a book giveaway, while learning about engineering, problem-solving, and creativity. This event was sponsored by Rockwell Automation.

Cocoa & Claus

Our second-annual Cocoa & Claus invited families to sip on hot cocoa while enjoying an exclusive story time and photo opportunity with Santa Claus!

New Year's Eve at Noon

At our most popular event of the year, children and families celebrated New Year's in beach-themed style! This sold-out celebration featured a noon beach ball drop and juice toast, a DJ dance party, face painting, and DIY confetti poppers and wishing wands.

Our Community Access Programs

Our Community Access Programs ensure more children and families can experience the lifelong benefits of play by reducing financial and accessibility barriers. This initiative directly supports a variety of high-impact programs, including:

- **Museums for All**, offering reduced-priced daily admission for families in need of financial support.
- **Access Memberships**, providing annual memberships at reduced cost for families with limited financial resources.
- **Community Access Days**, featuring free admission and extended hours on the third Thursday of each month to ensure broad community participation.
- **Baby Beginnings**, providing free parent education and infant skill development program sessions.
- **Sensory-Friendly Sessions**, adapting Museum environments to better serve individuals with sensory sensitivities.
- **Subsidized Field Trips**, offering reduced-cost visits for schools and community organizations serving children facing the greatest financial barriers and those with specific physical, developmental, and cognitive needs. We intentionally price our field trips below market to promote broad access, and we offer additional financial assistance to schools and community groups that need it most.
- **Wonder Wagon**, bringing the Museum experience directly into neighborhoods, parks, schools, and local events to reach families who may not otherwise be able to visit the Museum.

Our Community Access Programs are made possible in large part due to grants and donations designated to these program initiatives. These supporters are listed in the enclosed donor list. Thank you to all who help make these experiences possible for area children and families!



Story of Impact

Meet Charlie & Cataleya

Charlie and his four-year-old daughter, Cataleya, joined the Betty Brinn Children's Museum as members in 2025 and visited more than 70 times throughout the year! Since coming to play, Charlie has reflected on the numerous ways the Museum has impacted his daughter's development, including her social skills, confidence, creative thinking, and exposure to a variety of STEM learning activities.

Charlie shared, "I remember when we first came [to Betty Brinn], it wasn't as easy for Cataleya to go up to other kids and play with them. She was more off on her own. But Betty Brinn has really opened her up. She's so brave now and her imagination is off the roof now! I'm very grateful for [Betty Brinn's] donors because everything here is possible because of them."



Scan the code to hear Charlie and Cataleya's full story!



Our 2025 Impact

Visitors & Attendance



Nearly 170,000

total visitors engaged in hands-on, unstructured, play-based learning.



2,097

visitors attended sold-out special events.



96%

of our visitors came from Wisconsin, representing 37 counties, demonstrating broad statewide impact.



4,357

member families enjoyed unlimited annual admission.



42

states throughout the country visited.



708

unique zip codes were represented.

Community Access Programs

32%

of guests served by the Museum were supported by our Community Access Programs.

514

children and their families attended Sensory-Friendly Sessions.

1,493

families received a discounted annual pass through an Access Membership, a 20% increase from 2023.

10,500+

individuals received STEAM-focused programs at 64 local community events through the Wonder Wagon.

11,655

individuals received discounted daily admission through Museums for All.

9,947

individuals received free admission to the Museum during Community Access Days.

176

parents and babies engaged in Baby Beginnings programming.

218

hours of outreach programming, nearly doubling our time from 2024.

Field Trips & Curriculum-Based Programs

More than 13,300

students and adults visited the Museum and received educational programming.

64% of field trips were free or reduced-priced for schools and partners serving under-resourced communities.

244 schools, daycares, summer camps, and organizations attended field trips at the Museum.

Community Partnerships & Volunteer Engagement



The Museum benefited from **337 volunteer hours from 126 volunteers**, providing critical support across programs, events, and behind-the-scenes operations.



We donated more than **150 family memberships** to support local nonprofit organizations and schools in their fundraising efforts.

Thank You to Our 2025 Exhibit Sponsors



**Debra Altshul-Stark
and Brian Stark**

**Jerome J. and Dorothy H.
Holz Family Foundation**

The Teerlink Family

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2026

**19
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Cocoa
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2026

**31
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New Year's
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2027

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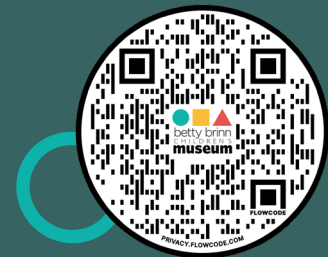
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