

NEWS FROM LEARNING PROGRAMS

Museum Staff Judge National History Day

On March 13 and 14, Philadelphia hosted National History Day (NHD) as part of an annual series of events for schoolchildren across the United States. This is a critical program that ensures students are not only learning history but also synthesizing and communicating information to make important connections with the past. NHD Philly engages 6th to 12th grade students throughout the region with historical research, source interpretation, and creative expression; it emphasizes use and understanding of both primary and secondary resources. By participating in NHD, students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights, and artists; they create unique contemporary expressions of the historical past.

Eric Schnittke (Museum Archives), along with Allyson Mitchell and Ellen Owens (Learning Programs) supported NHD Philly by judging the Senior Day competition. Nearly 300 area juniors and seniors from schools such as Masterman, Central, and West Philadelphia High participated. NHD Philly culminates with the top projects moving on to a statewide competition and ends in a nationwide competition. Student winners are eligible for scholarships, jobs, and other opportunities to continue their learning. The Penn Museum judges joined over 40 local professionals to support and emphasize the importance of learning about history in our schools.

World Cultures Day Highlights Cultural Traditions

Partnerships between the Penn Museum, South Asia Center, and Middle East Center allowed over 1,000 Philadelphia and regional students to get a true taste of world cultures this spring, all free of charge.

The annual partnership between the Museum and the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia kicked off in 2019 with the Junior United Nations Program to simulate interest in the role of foreign diplomats. The World Affairs Council is a nonpartisan educational organization dedicated to engaging people on matters of national and international significance. The Junior United Nations brings hundreds of regional middle school students to the Museum to begin their cultural exploration. High school students also got their turn for sponsored experiences at the Museum. Our World Cultures Day provided opportunities to nearby 9th to 12th graders to enjoy the diversity of cultural expressions across space and time.

All programs included a special keynote speaker, gallery tours, and International Classroom programs that



ABOVE: Students tour the Middle East Gallery as part of the Junior Model United Nations kick-off celebration.

connected to the galleries. Some schools even elected to come back for a paid school visit after their initial experience so they could interact with more of the collection and staff!

Collaborations with Penn GSE and Netter Center

Recent projects involving the Penn Museum, the Penn Graduate School of Education (GSE), and the Netter Center for Community Partnerships are expanding the reach and tools of these campus learning centers. The Museum is collaborating with GSE's new Project-Based Learning (PBL) center to develop new ways to help students with discipline-based learning and critical thinking skills. Together, the Museum and Penn PBL will facilitate a special professional development program for teachers this summer, providing opportunities to test the new tools.

The Netter Center's Young Quakers Community Athletics program arranged a field trip for students in the 4th to 8th grades from University-assisted Community Schools in West Philadelphia: Andrew Hamilton Elementary, Henry C. Lea Elementary, B.B. Comegys Elementary, and S. Weir Mitchell Elementary. The students received special access to a Penn lacrosse game at Franklin Field, and, beforehand, they visited the Museum to learn about the origins of lacrosse through a tour of our *Native American Voices: The People Here and Now*



ABOVE: West Philadelphia public school children learn about a Native American lacrosse stick at the Museum before heading to a Penn lacrosse game.

exhibition. The students were encouraged to explore the entire Museum, including our hands-on Cartifacts stations, to round out their experience. The Museum plans to continue and expand on these partnership opportunities next year to maximize the impact of the University on local communities.

Museum Educators Take Programs to Seniors

Demonstrating a commitment to life-long learning, the Museum's International Classroom speakers have been traveling to Voorhees, New Jersey to deliver a wide variety of programs for the Lions Gate Continuing Care Retirement Community. Lions Gate prides itself on creating a rich and active learning environment for its residents, who appreciate global perspectives, live performances, and educational opportunities.

Residents have enjoyed a special talk from a Penn Museum presenter twice a month. Presentations offered

different cultural perspectives, such as those of Haibin Weschler, a Chinese educator, and Ruth Pye, a Native American storyteller, while Dr. Stephen Phillips and Dr. Nick Eiteljorg offered in-depth experiences about their expeditions to Egypt and Italy respectively, along with detailed content knowledge about ancient life in those countries. Residents even received incredible performances of Sattriya, a classic Indian dance, and Egyptian belly dance. The Museum is proud to offer learning experiences to people of all ages.