Worcester an Innovation Center in $2.6 Million "Art of Science Learning" Grant

City is one of three selected to share National Science Foundation Award


Worcester is one of three cities selected to share a National Science Foundation (NSF) award of $2,654,895 for the Art of Science Learning Phase 2 grant titled "Integrating Informal STEM and Arts-Based Learning to Foster Innovation."

Over the next four years, this NSF grant will fund arts-based incubators for innovation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) learning in Worcester, San Diego, and Chicago, as well as a new arts-based STEM curriculum; experimental research to measure the impact of arts-based learning on creativity, collaboration and innovation; and public programs using the project's activities to advance civic engagement with STEM.

The incubators - hosted by Worcester's science and nature center, EcoTarium, San Diego's Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, and Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry - will bring together 30 cross-disciplinary innovation teams of STEM professionals, artists, educators, business leaders and students. The teams will learn arts-based techniques for generating, transforming, prototyping and communicating creative ideas and apply them to STEM-related civic innovation challenges. Participants will also collaborate on the development of new educational projects that integrate arts-based approaches into STEM learning.

Harvey Seifter, Art of Science Learning founder/director, is the project's director and principal investigator. As project sponsor, San Diego's Balboa Park Cultural
Partnership is the recipient of the grant, and Paige Simpson, the Partnership's Interim Executive Director, is project administrator.

Innovation festivals, art/science innovation symposia, prototype demonstrations and a culminating interactive exhibition, created by the Rueben H. Fleet Science Center in San Diego and traveling to each incubator site, will reach national audiences with compelling stories about the civic impact of innovation at the intersection of art, science and learning.

Art of Science Learning Phase 2 national partners include Association of Science-Technology Centers, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Americans for the Arts. The project is also supported by a distinguished national advisory council. Worcester members of the National Advisory Council are:

- Nancy Budwig, Associate Provost and Dean of Research, Clark University
- Karen Kashmanian Oates, Dean of Arts & Sciences, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Members of the Worcester Incubator Advisory Council include:

- Melinda Boone, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
- Kristin Boudreau, Professor & Department Head, Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Ted Buswick, Executive-in-Residence for Leadership & the Arts, Clark University; National Collaborations Manager for this project
- Jack Foley, Vice President for Government and Community Affairs and Campus Services, Clark University
- Marcia Lagerwey, Head of Education, Worcester Art Museum
- Timothy Loew, Executive Director, Massachusetts Digital Games Institute (MassDIGI)
- Sandra Mayrand, Executive Director & Founder, Regional Science Resource Center (RSRC), UMass Medical School; Director, Central Massachusetts STEM Network
- Stephen Pitcher, President, EcoTarium
- Wyatt Wade, President & CEO, Davis Publications
- Erin Williams, Cultural Development Officer, City of Worcester; Executive Director, Worcester Cultural Coalition

The Art of Science Learning is a national initiative that uses the arts to spark creativity in science education and foster the development of a skilled 21st Century STEM workforce. In 2011, the initiative's first phase explored the connection between arts-based learning, scientific innovation, and economic competitiveness; convening more than 400 scientists, artists, educators, researchers, business leaders, and policymakers from across the country to participate in regional conferences at the Smithsonian Institution, CalIT2/UCSD and Illinois Institute of
Technology.

EcoTarium is New England's leading science and nature center, an indoor-outdoor venue dedicated to inspiring a passion for science and nature in visitors of all ages. The center offers a museum building with three floors of interactive exhibits and is home to live animal habitats, interpretive nature trails through forest and meadow, the Alden Digital Planetarium, a tree canopy walkway (seasonal) and a narrow-gauge railroad.

Related links:
http://www.ecotarium.org/
http://www.bpcp.org/
www.msichicago.org
http://artofsciencelearning.org/
www.clarku.edu
http://www.nsf.gov/
http://www.worcesterart.org/
www.umassmed.edu/rsrcl/
http://www.wpi.edu/
http://www.worcesterma.gov/
http://worcesterschools.org
http://www.massdqj.org/
http://www.davisart.com/
http://www.worcestermass.org/arts-culture-entertainment/worcester-cultural-coalition
www.rhfleet.org/
www.astc.org/

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