



CMOS Volunteer Handbook



Mission Statement

The Children's Museum of the Shoals delights the child in every visitor in a fun, creative, and enriching "touch-everything" experience where exploration stimulates lifelong curiosity and learning.

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A Note from the Director...

Dear New Volunteers,

I want to welcome you to our family. During your time with us, I want you to feel a part of our family in every way. The museum is a magical place for our visitors because of you and our staff.

Volunteers are chosen based on the love and concern for the development and interaction with children, the museum and its distinction, and community service action. We appreciate your time and efforts and hope you learn and enjoy all aspects of CMOS.

This museum is and always will be ever changing and evolving in positive, unique, and creative ways. Please do not hesitate in giving opinions, ideas, developing your talents, or coming to me with concerns. CMOS is truly a "gem" of the Shoals area and you make it a better place.

Sincerely,

Angi Nutt

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand"
Old Chinese Proverb



CMOS Fact Sheet

What we are: A discovery museum for young people and their families, providing hands-on exhibits and programs designed to encourage visitors to create, to imagine and to learn by doing.

Our audience: 38,000 children and growing in a three county area (Franklin, Colbert, and Lauderdale), which also includes school children from greater Northwest Alabama and contiguous areas of Mississippi and Tennessee. Tourists regularly visit from across the nation and around the world. Our visitor list encompasses California to Zambia.

Who we are:

- A governing Board of Directors
- A community wide Educational Advisory Committee
- A professional paid staff
- A growing number of interested community members providing volunteer services
- Museum Members

Our mission:

- To foster lifelong learning through multidisciplinary educational experiences
- To encourage the creative imagination in every child
- To strive to delight the child in every visitor
- To provide educational, creative and fun experiences through play

Site: The Museums opened in August 2001 in an historic house located in Deibert Park in Florence. The 1930's house has been transformed into a world-class museum. Some of the original structure of the house has been preserved as well.

History:

1995 Area educators and community leaders form steering Committee.

1996 Focus group interviews become the basis for exhibit designs. Children's Museum of the Shoals incorporated as private nonprofit educational corporation.

1997 Museum attained IRS 501 (c) 3 status. Site selected at Deibert Park. Stuftee travels to schools as outreach exhibit. Museum presents hands-on activities at area festivals.

1998 Museum hires exhibit design team of Reb Haizlip and Jeanne Finan. Office established on site.



1999 Capital Campaign begins.
2000 Construction/renovation begins.
2001 August 15, 2001 open to public
2002 May/ 25,000th visitor
2003 Deibert Environmental Education Program

Programs:

- Regularly scheduled workshops and experiences including “Story Times” (one session for children under four only and one for all ages), Stuffee (a health and anatomy exploration), “Family Art Day,” our children-named “Big Paint Day,” and a monthly Magic Show with Sir Priz.
- Various programs and workshops are offered at different times as part of the growth of the museum.
- School Field Trips (Pre-k-3rd grade) and the Deibert Environmental Education Program known as DEEP (environmental field trip) for 4-6th graders.
- A variety of special events and performances are presented in cooperation with other area agencies, including science, horticulture, environment, puppets, theatre, music, storytelling, art, and traditional crafts.

Birthday Parties: The Children’s Museum of the Shoals offers exciting birthday party packages. The new Enchanted Kingdom Party Room will offer a magical atmosphere where the birthday child will be King or Queen for a day and enjoy festivities with friends and loved ones. The Enchanted Kingdom features a handcrafted Birthday Throne that sets the tone for the whole room. The new room is scheduled to open October 2006. Please refer to the enclosed brochure for scheduling, pricing and party information.

Exhibits:

- Both indoor and outdoor exhibits feature
- A River Runs Through It – navigate the Tennessee River
 - Club Percussion – experience rhythm and music of the Shoals
 - From Blueprint to Building – try your hand at architecture and construction work
 - Once Upon a Forest – perform on stage in the magical land of make believe
 - We Are People First – discover how people overcome obstacles and disabilities
 - This Little Piggy – toddlers go to market
 - The Big Dig – become a paleontologist
 - Ishatae (A special place) – explore Native American daily life
 - Artsploration – be imaginative and create your own masterpiece
 - Game Yard –activities vary with season; herb and vegetable garden



Finances:

We are a non-profit organization and we have “tax-exempt” status. Funds generated by public and private contributions and earned income from admissions, memberships, grants, workshop fees, gift shop sales, birthday parties and special events. We are not funded by state or federal means.

Membership:

Various membership levels are offered: Basic (\$45 two people), Basic Plus One (\$60, three people), Family (\$80 four people), ACM Reciprocal (\$100) Supporter (\$150), Sponsor (\$250), Benefactor (\$500), Patron (\$1000). Contributing memberships support the development of exhibits, programs, workshops and outreach activities. All membership benefits include free admission, monthly calendar, discounts, advance notice of programs and events. As of summer 2006 we had about 550 family memberships. Museums members of the Association of Children’s Museum (ACM) may be located by visiting the ACM Website at www.childrensmuseums.org or by checking the ACM brochures¹. For more detailed information on CMOS memberships, please refer to the enclosed brochure.

Attendance:

Yearly attendance has averaged 30,000 visitors. Average number of visitors in 2005 reached 48,000.

Admission:

Adults and children 2 and up: \$4.00 per person
Children under 2: Free
Members: Free
School Groups (10 or more students): \$3.00 per student -
Advance reservations required for all school groups. The Museum is dedicated to securing funds for subsidized tours and regular free hours with the goal of making the Museum accessible to visitors of all income levels.

Hours:

Open Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Closed Sundays, Mondays and major holidays.

Affiliations:

Association of Children’s Museums, Shoals Chamber of Commerce, Alabama Mountain Lakes, Legacy and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, American Museum Association

¹ **Please Note:** The Association of Children’s Museum is not providing brochures after 2005. Museums participating in the membership would add on or drop off at various times during the year, thus making anything in print outdated. The ACM Website has a current listing of all participating museums at any given time.



Contact Information

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Marsha Whitten	Artist in Residence	marci.whitten@shoalschildrensmuseum.org	(256) 765-0500
Monica Collier	Guest Services Manager	monicacollier@shoalschildrensmuseum.org	(256) 765-0500

We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.
-Winston Churchill



Museum's Policies

Volunteers are part of the staff of the Children's Museum of the Shoals and are considered a valued and vital partner in the process of helping our little guests discover and learn concepts through hands-on activities.

We are very thankful to our volunteer staff; and we ask that you consider this undertaking very carefully. Your help is essential and indispensable to the museum.

Volunteers are considered active after all the required paperwork has been completely filled out, including background check consent, and after the first orientation meeting. Volunteers are welcome throughout the year.

Attendance

The assignments that are carried out by volunteers are of great importance to the museum and its ongoing success. The museum depends on volunteers to a great extent for its proper functioning, and therefore appreciates constancy and dependability.

If volunteers need to be excused from work for a time or are going to be arriving later and/or leaving earlier, they should notify the supervisor² in advance. Notifications will help the staff, so that arrangements can be made to cover volunteer assignments.

Recording of Hours

CMOS maintains records of hours donated by our volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for recording their hours on the appropriate log. Also, volunteers and their supervisor should both sign on the timesheet. One copy of the timesheet is given to the volunteers and one copy is kept for the Museum's records.

Volunteer timekeeping provides the Museum with an invaluable resource when applying for grants. Please see attached copy of the Time Record Sheet.

Identification

It is important that volunteers wear nametags at all times while working at the Museum. Guests will appreciate having a quick visual reference of whom they can refer to for help or questions. Please, introduce yourself to all visitors as you meet them.

Personal Safety

The Children's Museum of the Shoals intends for all volunteers to carry out their duties in a safe environment. If an injury occurs while a volunteer is working for the Museum, the volunteer should notify the supervisor immediately and seek first aid. Volunteer and supervisor should also complete an accident report form. One copy will be given to the volunteer and one copy will be for the Museum's records. Please see attached copy of Accident Report Form.

² The title of "Supervisor" indicates administrative staff that is in charge of the volunteers for a specific day, event or activity.



Visitor and Staff Interaction

The Children's Museum of the Shoals expects all volunteers to act in a professional, polite, and proper manner in all circumstances with other staff members and with guests. Guests appreciate a cheerful, helpful attitude, and should feel at home here.

Appropriate professional language with all staff and volunteers, members and visitors should be chosen at all times. In the same manner, positive language about the museum should be used at all times. Think of yourself as a guest; what kind of image of the museum would you like to receive?

Volunteers on the floor should make it a point to greet guests. When speaking to a child, it is important to bend down at the child's level, ask the child's name and introduce yourself to the child and parent. Some children do not like physical contact like a hug or "high five." If you do either, make sure their guardian is present.

Volunteers might at times be asked questions they are not sure how to answer. If so, volunteers should take a few minutes to ask staff the answer or direct the guests to staff members. Volunteers should make every effort to help guests in their inquiry.

Volunteers witnessing imminent danger should take immediate action to help guests. Volunteers who see guests engaging in a *potentially* dangerous activity for them and/or for the Museum's property may encourage them to discontinue such activity and encourage them to perform it in a non-harmful way. If the guests persist, volunteers should contact supervisor for assistance. Volunteers are solely responsible for directing guests in positive ways. Staff will be responsible for any other actions.

Security

The Children's Museum of the Shoals aims to provide a safe environment for volunteers, guests and employees. Volunteers must report to the Director any witnessed instance of a doubtful behavior on the part of other guests or employees. Volunteers should lock office door after entering or leaving the building. No guest should be allowed in the back offices without the invitation or permission from the supervisor or Director³. The Museum is not responsible for any lost or stolen items or belongings. Volunteers should leave personal items in the back office in their designated area for safety.

Record Management

The Museum's Office maintains records on each volunteer for the current and past years. Records include dates of volunteer service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of volunteer performance, and awards/recognitions received. Volunteer records, including application and background checks are kept confidential. Volunteers are responsible for submitting and updating information as needed to their files.

³ The term "Director" refers to the Executive Director of the Children's Museum of the Shoals.



Dress Code

Volunteers are professional representatives of the Museum and are responsible for presenting a positive image to Museum's guests. Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Appropriate apparel includes: name tags; kaki pants, Capri pants, shorts 1-2 inches above the knee minimum length; jeans –only allowed if they completely cover abdomen and are not dirty, torn, ripped or dragging the floor. Shirts must also completely cover the abdomen and back when bending over. Shirts with logos or advertisements are not allowed. Shirts should not have spaghetti straps or low cut front or back. Shoes should be comfortable and clean. Tennis shoes are allowed as long as they are clean and not worn out. Flip-flops are not allowed. Hats are not allowed. Please do not chew gum while on the floor. Tattoos must be child appropriate (see Director). If tattoos are inappropriate, volunteers will be asked to keep them covered. Any piercing other than ears are inappropriate (see Director).

As a representative of the museum, make sure that your appearance is neat and well groomed.

Training

Volunteers receive training as part of their volunteer service. Volunteer orientation provides an overview of the Museum, its mission, history and goals. Orientation and all required paperwork must be completed before volunteers can start working. Volunteer assignment or program training will be offered to volunteers for specific tasks in which they may be involved at appropriate times during the year.

Training will clarify the skills and knowledge necessary to perform a specific volunteer assignment. Volunteers are also encouraged to share any talents or skills they may possess that could benefit the Museum.

The Museum will offer on site CPR and First Aid training to volunteers. TB testing at the county health department is required within the first two weeks. (Free to you) A record from the health department must be given to the Director, signed, and placed in your file. Termination will occur if you have TB as stated by the state health department.

Youth Volunteers

Volunteers under 18 years of age must have written consent of a parent or guardian before volunteering. Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation.

Evaluation

Volunteers will be asked to complete a self-evaluation about their experience at the museum. Evaluations will help the Director create a volunteer program that is efficient and well organized. The evaluation will also give the Director insightful perspectives on how to enhance museum exhibits, procedures and programming.

The Museum seeks to provide the best services for guests and the best environment for staff/volunteers. The volunteer will then meet with the Director to discuss any concerns or ideas expressed in writing. We care about you and appreciate



positive feedback.

Conduct

CMOS expects all volunteers to maintain a professional, ethical and moral conduct while representing the museum to public. The Museum has no tolerance for inappropriate conduct of its representatives. The following are only some examples of actions that could lead to dismissal:

- Not showing up for work on a scheduled time and not calling (2 times);
- Being consistently late for work with no excuse (2 times).
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Museum property or that of any Museum volunteer, staff, agent or visitor.
- Altering Museum reports or records.
- Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and/or illegal or unauthorized possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the volunteer environment.
- Creating a disturbance on Museum premises, at sponsored activities or in areas that could jeopardize the safety of others.
- Improper use of Museum property.
- Lack of cooperation, or other disrespectful conduct.
- Violation of Museum, federal, state, or local laws.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, computer equipment or systems, mail system, E-mail system, facsimile machines, or other Museum-owned equipment.
- Unauthorized disclosure of Museum proprietary or confidential information.
- Unprofessional verbal misconduct with staff or guests.

Smoking

The Children's Museum of the Shoals promotes an environment that is safe and healthy for all guests. Smoking in the workplace or workplace premises is prohibited.

Drug-Free Environment

The Children's Museum of the Shoals provides a drug-free, healthy, and safe environment. While on Museum premises, a volunteer may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Volunteers may take prescription or over the counter medications if so needed. Volunteers should notify the supervisor in case of collateral effects that could be caused by medications.

Resignation

Volunteers who choose to resign from the CMOS Volunteer Program need to present a letter stating the reason of the resignation to the Director at least one week prior to resignation.

Dismissal



Volunteers may be dismissed for misconduct and non-compliance with the Museum’s goals and standards. As a reminder, two (2) no-show/ no-call episodes will lead to dismissal and continued and unexcused tardiness will also lead to dismissal.

The volunteer who demonstrates no respect for the museum and its standards of behavior will be verbally warned twice. Oral warnings will state the misconduct; reiterate proper behavior and remind volunteer of Museum’s principles of behavior. Oral warnings will only be used in *light* instances of non-compliance. The museum has a zero tolerance policy for *severe* instances of misconduct.

The Director will evaluate individual cases in accordance with ethical and moral standards that the Museum upholds. The Director reserves the right to terminate a volunteer immediately if the case requires it.

Commendations and Recognition

The Museum and the staff are extremely thankful to volunteers for their precious help and contributions. As a first expression of gratitude, CMOS offers all volunteers a 10% off admission and gift shop purchases.

Volunteers who are seen going above and beyond the call of duty, or putting special effort and energy in their assignments will be recognized by a commendation form. Staff will fill out the form explaining how and when the volunteer merited the "extra" appreciation. The Form will be brought to the attention of the Director. The staff will make one copy of the form for the volunteer and one copy for record keeping.

After volunteers offer their dedication and positive energy to the Museum for a certain period of time, they become eligible for certain gifts. Please refer to the chart below for more details.

Level	Time Volunteered	Gifts from CMOS
Museum’s Friend	240 hours during 8 months	20% discount on gift shop items and on admission of immediate family members –MUST SHOW PASS
Silver Friend	360 hours during 10 months	One "Admit-One" Pass to the Museum
Gold Friend	480 hours during 12 months	"Care Basket" from CMOS
Best Friend	540 hours during 12 months	Recognition Luncheon hosted by CMOS and held at CMOS

Volunteer’s Signature

Supervisor’s Signature

Date

Date

