ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS:

With our centennial celebrations now concluded, we are eagerly looking forward to the continued evolution of the Detroit Historical Society. We approach this new era with great enthusiasm and anticipation for the opportunities it will bring. Building on the rich foundation of the past 100 years, we are committed to continuing our mission of sharing Detroit's stories, preserving its history for generations to come, and expanding our impact.

We thank you, our dedicated members, generous donors, and champions. Your support allows us to fulfill our mission, encourages us to dream, and galvanizes us to achieve.

As we enter our second century, we are excited to explore innovative ways to engage with our communities and ensure that Detroit's narratives remain relevant and impactful. We will continue to create compelling exhibitions, develop thought-provoking programs, and strengthen our community outreach efforts. By embracing new technologies and approaches, we aim to reach an even wider audience and create educational, dynamic, and entertaining experiences.

We are committed to remaining a trusted resource for historical knowledge, a catalyst for dialogue, and a platform for diverse voices to be heard and celebrated. This past year has been filled with accomplishments that illustrate our efforts towards these goals. We invite you to review our annual highlights in the following pages and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Elanatush

ELANA RUGH PRESIDENT & CEO DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JOHN P. DECKER CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On front: Young visitors explore the updated *Origins: Life Where the River Bends* exhibition at the Detroit Historical Museum.

2022-23 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDUCATION, PROGRAMS & OUTREACH:

- We welcomed 16,000+ students in FY23 at both of our museums. Once again, we partnered with Detroit Public Schools Community District and hosted all third grade students as part of the Cultural Passport program at both the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum.
- Over the summer, we participated in learning activities with the University of Michigan River Storylab, along with a cohort of other local businesses and institutions.
- The Dossin Great Lakes Museum acted as one of the host sites for Michigan State's 2023 Earth Day Celebration, welcoming families for crafts and activities, along with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and their friends, several sea lampreys.
- We hosted Camp Detroit, our refreshed in-person summer camp with 32 students ages 8-12 in a weeklong learning expedition about the Detroit River and its human, animal, natural, and watercraft history. Through a generous grant from the Children's Foundation, we were able to offer scholarships to many of our participants.
- We hosted the District 10 contest for Michigan History Day for students in Wayne County once again. We welcomed seven school districts, three of which were new to the event, and 70 students. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, our contest was moved to a virtual format. Despite this challenge, five students went onto the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C.
- This year we saw the return of two much-loved family programs, our Treats in the Streets Halloween event at the Detroit Historical Museum and Shiver on the River at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum in partnership with the Friends of the Detroit River.



Camp Detroit hosted 32 kids at the Dossin for a week-long summer camp experience.

- Our annual celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. saw record attendance. Hosted by the Black Historic Sites Committee, our event featured speaker Dr. Elliott Hall, longtime civil rights activist who worked with Dr. King during his visits to Detroit.
- In February, we continued our annual Black History Month celebration program, On the Shoulders of Giants. This year's event included our annual vendor fair, expanded to 20 business owners.
- We had an incredible week-long program lineup for Juneteenth, featuring several programs geared towards both adults and the youth. The museum hosted a ceremony honoring black philanthropists in concert with our *Soul of Philanthropy* exhibit.
- Alongside the Detroit Branch of the NAACP and local institutions, we marked the 60th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Detroit Walk to Freedom. Society staff marched down Woodward and collected oral histories from people that were part of the March 60 years ago and today.
- We also hosted an MLK family day and welcomed Nandi Comer, Poet Laureate for the State of Michigan, who led children through a workshop aimed at self-expression and capturing memories through written and spoken word.
- Behind the Scenes tours took a ride around the Metro Detroit Region as we visited 24 sites with our adventurous patrons, experiencing houses of worship, an arena, music shop, mail boat, and automotive collection, just to name a few!



Thousands marched in downtown Detroit to mark the 60th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Walk to Freedom.

EXHIBITIONS & CURATORIAL:

- We commemorated the 25-year anniversary of the Red Wings' Stanley Cup win with *1997: Detroit Red Wings* in the *Robert and Mary Ann Bury Community Gallery*. The exciting exhibition featured our artifacts, loaned objects from Ilitch Holdings Corporate Archives, including the boards and goal lights from Joe Louis Arena, and memorabilia from local collectors.
- Back by popular demand, our *Hudson's Holidays* exhibition transformed the *Motor City Music* gallery into a holiday wonderland. The exhibit drew from our collection of toys and Hudson's artifacts, and once again incorporated loaned objects from local collectors and fans.
- Our biannual partnership with Wayne State University's Public History program continued with three exhibits researched, developed, and curated by WSU students. This year's topics were *Dallying in the Alley, Movie Palaces of Detroit,* and *Then and Now: Women's Social Movements in Detroit.*
- A new tribute to legendary Detroit singer Mary Wilson, a founding member of the Supremes, debuted in the *Motor City Music* exhibition. On display through February 2024, the exhibit allows visitors to listen to and learn about Wilson's hits, from her time with the Supremes to her solo career.
- Did you know that our Woodward Avenue location is NOT the first Detroit Historical Museum? We highlighted this little-known fact with a pop-up exhibit of past Detroit Historical Society sites during the 100th Anniversary Celebration.
- The *Automotive Showplace* featured a 1984 Mercury Capri Pilot Car over the summer, just in time to welcome the Grand Prix back to the streets of Detroit. It was used as a pace car for the 1985 race.

MUSEUM RENTALS:

- We concentrated on corporate, foundation, nonprofit, and partnership events this year, suspending hosting social events like weddings and retirement parties due to staffing. This adjusted focus, staffing plan, and schedule helped us to safeguard the museums while offering an excellent level of service to those events that we were able to accommodate.
- The museums remain quite popular with potential clients and with a stabilized VEA corps, we have a plan to bring back social events on a limited basis in FY24 to make the museums available to a wider array of users and help increase rental revenue.

- With generous funding from the Society of Colonial Wars, we completed phase one of updates to *Origins: Life Where the River Bends*. Correlated to Michigan's State Standards for Learning for 3rd and 4th grades, the exhibition has been enhanced with new artifacts, a longer history with careful attention to the stories of Detroit's Indigenous People and early immigrants, and updated technology.
- *Detroit: The Arsenal of Democracy* was updated this year with a woman's uniform for the first time. Its showcase now features Master Sergeant Ellen Heliste's story and WAC uniform.
- The Community Gallery featured diverse partner exhibits, including Detroit Fine Art Breakfast Club, Humanize the Numbers, and The Soul of Philanthropy Reframed and Exhibited.
- Detroit Gives Black was staged outside the Community Gallery as a companion exhibit to The Soul of Philanthropy. Curated locally, it featured 80+ portraits of local philanthropists and told their stories of giving back to the community.
- At the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, we partnered with the University of Michigan to present *Microplastics: Here, There, Everywhere,* which debuted for our Earth Day celebration.



The 1984 Mercury Capri Pilot Car and Hudson's Holidays.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- We ended FY23 with very successful web and digital growth. Our website pageviews grew by 14.5% from the prior year (reaching 1.3 million) and our website users increased by 28.4% (to 720,800). With the launch of our new website coming next calendar year, we are well positioned to continue this trend.
- We now have 117,000+ fans and followers across social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube). Last year, we reached 11.1 million people across platforms with 12.7 million impressions on our social content.
- Our Hustle social media campaign received 175,000 impressions across platforms, and The Hustle was covered in numerous media outlets, including the Detroit Regional Chamber, *Crains Detroit Business, DBusiness,* CBS Detroit, WDIV, Fox 2, and WDET.
- Our 2023 Fall Education promotional campaign reached 42,644 people and 1429 engagements on social media in addition to 2,000 School Programs Guides mailed statewide. We also highlighted the refreshed *Origins* exhibition in several media opportunities.
- The *1997: Detroit Red Wings* and *Hudson's Holidays* opened with strong media coverage, from WDIV, WXYZ, msn.com, WRIF, *Oakland Press, Macomb Daily,* and others.
- Our holiday shopping social media campaign concluded with 25 posts, 37,708 people reached, and 1,137 interactions across platforms. The online store had 115 orders over the holiday season, with 30% of customer sessions coming in from social or search.
- We welcomed nearly 3,000 visitors during our Free Holiday Sundays and our (paid) Holiday Week hours; 2,187 at the Detroit Historical Museum and 633 at the Dossin.
- *Detroit: City of Churches*, a documentary created by Keith Famie's production company, premiered on Detroit Public Television in mid-December. The crew filmed on-site with us at the Detroit Historical Museum, interviewed staff, and used our historic images. We hosted two screenings of the film for Detroit Historical Museum patrons and offered tours of Mariner's Church and Ste. Anne's.
- We redesigned the exterior banners and lamp post banners at the Detroit Historical Museum to showcase some of our collections images, incorporate our centennial branding, and showcase the museum's permanent exhibitions, working with FWD Design.

- Channel 7 and CBS Detroit covered our MLK Day event on-site, and guest speaker Elliott Hall gave interviews to both outlets.
- We promoted the 100th Anniversary Celebration on April 29 with an extremely successful social media campaign. On Facebook and Instagram, we reached 1.2 million+ people with 43,000+ engagements.
- We had great media coverage at the 100th Anniversary Celebration, with photographers onsite from *DBusiness*, *HOUR Detroit*, AmericaJR, CBS Detroit, and the *Detroit News*. A small crew from Bally Sports Detroit (local broadcaster for the Red Wings, Pistons, and Tigers) captured video footage of the hand casting ceremony that aired during that weekend's Tigers game and on social media.
- We kicked off a comprehensive website rebuild in May with Zengenuity, our longtime web maintenance and development partner, to create an all-new site with improved features, architecture, and design over the next fiscal year.
- The Dossin Great Lakes Museum's webcam was in the spotlight on May 17, 2023, when a large freighter ran aground near the museum's location on Belle Isle. We had 2,830 unique visitors to webcam's landing page on our website in 24 hours with 7+ minutes of average viewing time.
- The webcam also broadcasts live to YouTube, and thousands more viewers tuned in on that platform via the local and national media coverage that included MSN.com, Yahoo News, and the Associated Press.
- We promoted Camp Detroit with media placements on WDIV, WDET-FM, and WXYZ, and 63,000+ impressions via targeted social advertising on Instagram and Facebook.



RETAIL & VISITOR SERVICES

- We continued to focus on partnerships that make Society merchandise available throughout the Metro area and making our online store as user-friendly and secure as possible. Our partnership with the Detroit Shoppe at the Somerset Collection continues to add substantial value to our annual retail revenue.
- New products by local designers and manufacturers diversified our offerings this year, joining the nostalgic favorites that help customers celebrate the Detroit they remember from their youth. Hudson's shopping bags, Stroh's merchandise, Farmer Jack t-shirts, one-of-a-kind sports pieces, and everything auto-related continue to make the Detroit Historical Museum store a popular shopping destination.
- The Society has worked hard over the past two years to support and celebrate its Visitor Experience staff, helping us achieve a stable and enthusiastic corps of associates to provide service to our museum visitors. We continue to improve retention, add to the VEA corps, and promote internally for leadership positions, stabilizing this essential workforce.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- If FY22 was the year that became known as "The Great Resignation," then FY23 was a year of restoration and rebuilding. Thanks to transitional funding from the State of Michigan, the City of Detroit, and above all our benefactors, we restored several positions vacant since COVID and added several key positions especially on the Exhibitions, Programs, and Enrichment team.
- We now have a full-time staff of 37 and 23 part-time staff that help fulfill our mission. We said goodbye to a few full-time staff, but overall turnover was significantly reduced from prior year. This was in part due to a comprehensive compensation and benefits analysis that was completed mid-year with the help of experienced Board of Trustee members and an outside consultant.
- Compensation coupled with other benefits that focused on wellness and professional development, a paid parental leave policy, and a flexible PTO policy have made us an "employer of choice" in the non-profit sector.
- We were able to add several key positions to the ranks of the Collections Resource Center team, including a new Automotive and Industrial Curator, and two new Collections Coordinators assigned to digitize the collection (funded by the IMLS).

- We set our sights on surpassing pre-COVID visitor levels this year and extended museum hours over the summer. We opened both museums from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday - Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays, from May 31 to October 1.
- We also activated the museums with events and activities designed to introduce or reintroduce niche groups to the Detroit Historical Society. These strategies were successful; we recorded 5,648 more visitors in June, July, and August than during the same period last year, an increase of 46%.



Museum visitorship rebounded to pre-COVID levels in FY23, with the return of several popular family programs.



WSU student-curated exhibitions returned, including a display on *Women's Social Movements in Detroit.*



Behind the Scenes Tours visited locations around the Metro Area.

MARKETING EVENTS:

- On July 17, our Ride of the Century was held at Fort Wayne with about 50 riders in attendance. We also hosted well-attended Collections Resource Center and Fort tours after the ride.
- The day before, on July 16, the Detroit Historical Museum hosted a partnership event with the Uso Car Club, celebrating their 30th anniversary and bringing lowrider cars from around the neighborhood and the country for display. It served as a family friendly daytime kick-off for the 2022 Concert of Colors, with musical guests, free museum admission, and food.
- We hosted a successful Thursday evening lecture on Frederick Law Olmsted at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on August 4, with 96 tickets sold.
- Our Toast to the Hustle event on August 18 drew 385 guests to the Detroit Historical Museum for a festive kick-off to the exhibition and celebration phases of the project. The Hustle honorees were in attendance and recognized on stage.
- On February 11, our autograph and photo day with Vladimir Konstantinov was a fitting closing event for the *1997: Detroit Red Wings* exhibition with 75 tickets sold.
- The same weekend as the 100th Anniversary Celebration, we continued our successful partnership with the Freep Film Festival by hosting seven screenings in the Detroit Historical Museum's auditorium. The films selected for our site were all themed around the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.
- Dr. Michael Eric Dyson appeared at the Detroit Historical Museum on June 10 for an event highlighting the health dangers of tobacco in the Black community, hosted by Making It Count Community Development Corp.



OPERATIONS

Thanks to \$1 million in capital expenditures funding from the city of Detroit, plus additional funding from the IMLS and NEH, we made significant progress in maintaining and upgrading our two museums and the Collections Resource Center. Projects included:

- Replaced obsolete analog-based security systems at all 3 buildings with digital cameras and state of the art censors improving our overall safety and better securing our artifacts.
- Installed new AEDs in all buildings to better respond to a potential medical emergency.
- Replaced and upgraded public restroom fixtures as part of a multi-year plumbing program.
- Installed a new door system at the Kirby Entrance of the Detroit Historical Museum, improving accessibility and safety.
- The Booth Auditorium at the Detroit Historical Museum received upgrades and enhancements to better show films and support virtual programs.
- Installed 3 electric vehicle charging stations at the Detroit Historical Museum to better serve the increasing number of patrons and visitors who drive EVs
- A complete recarpeting of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.
- The Collection Resource Center received several upgrades including a new roofing system for buildings 2B and 2C, HVAC systems that were repaired and upgraded, and a new forklift used to move large artifacts and other large items in the collection.



Much-needed roof repairs were completed at the Collection Resource Center.

THE HUSTLE: YEAR ONE

- We completed the first year of our two-year initiative *The Hustle: Celebrating Detroit's Unsung Entrepreneurs* in FY23. The project shares the stories of inspiring Black Detroit business owners, told in their own words. Year one milestones:
 - April 27, 2022 press conference and program launch.
 - June 2022 nomination period ended with 718 nominations and 440 nominees.
 - August 18, 2022 Toast of the Hustle launch party, attended by 385 guests and catered by 8 nominees.
 - 34 of 36 honorees were successfully photographed and interviewed.
 - The first of four public programs complete, 100 reached.
 - The first of four educational programs complete, 40 reached.
 - Three of four quarterly exhibits staged, 46,500 visitors.
 - Artists and Foodies October 22, 2022 to January 8, 2023.
 - *Fixers and Helpers* January 14, 2023 to April 9, 2023.
 - *Makers and Creators* April 15, 2023 to July 9, 2023.
- The Hustle concludes with its second year of programming in 2023, including a final quarterly exhibit, three additional public programs, more educational programming, and a final comprehensive exhibition. The project's grand finale will be a gala in early 2024.



The Hustle kicked off with an April press conference at the Detroit Historical Museum. Trustee Marc Bland is pictured speaking.





We completed three of four quarterly exhibitions for the Hustle in the *Allesee Gallery of Culture.*



The nomination period for The Hustle wrapped up with 718 nominations and 440 nominees.

DEVELOPMENT:

- We received a \$600,000 gift from the estate of Terence Adderley. We will use this generous gift to help us launch a formal planned giving program for the Society.
- The Kresge Foundation awarded us with a \$350,000 grant, payable over two years, for general operations.
- The Hudson-Webber Foundation awarded the Society a \$200,000 grant for general operating support of our Millage activities for FY23 and FY24. These are matching funds which helped us launch the Next Century Club and boosted individual giving.
- Working with our Exhibitions team, we received a \$180,000 grant payable over three years from the Society of Colonial Wars for the sponsorship of *Origins: Life Where the River Bends.* Payments began in Spring 2023.
- We hosted 400 people at the Detroit Historical Museum in April 2023 to celebrate the Society's 100th anniversary. The VIP event sold out with 180 people attending. Highlights of the evening included five new inductees who provided handprints to our outdoor *Legends Plaza*: Ben Wallace, Lomas Brown, George Blaha, Ken Daniels, and Amyre Makeupson.
- We initiated donor cultivation parties to introduce people to Detroit Historical Society. To date, we have hosted house parties, a reception at a private club, and a Red Wings game, which was enjoyed by several donors in a box suite at Little Caesar's Arena.

MEMBERSHIP:

- We welcomed 2,591 new members and ended the year with 3,929 members. Fifty-four members celebrated milestone anniversaries including four special members who celebrated their 30th year of Detroit Historical Society membership!
- We expanded our team this year with two new employees a Member Experience Manager and Member Engagement Coordinator.
- Revenue from membership dues totaled \$67,839. Our members contributed an additional \$53,943 in donations to support our mission.
- We ended the Fiscal Year laying the groundwork for a month of Member Appreciation Days to kick off the new year.



We hosted 400 guests for the 100th Anniversary Celebration in April. The evening featured a sold out VIP reception, strolling dinner and drinks, music, entertainment, and historical vignettes throughout the Detroit Historical Museum.



Detroit Pistons great Ben Wallace, Lions legend Lomas Brown, legendary sports broadcasters George Blaha and Ken Daniels, and acclaimed anchorwoman Amyre Makupson cast their hands in cement for display on Legends Plaza.





COLLECTIONS & DIGITIZATION:

- Installation of the 360-degree ArcEye camera system was completed at the start of FY23. The ArcEye is designed to photograph cars and can be used to create interactive "spins" of photographed items for our online collection.
- With the help of a new IMLS grant, we filled three new ArcEye-related positions: two collections coordinators to digitize items from our transportation, furniture, and model ship collections, plus an Industrial and Automotive Curator to take stewardship of our automotive collection.
- An additional two new staff members were added to handle the inventory, processing, and digitization of our sizable new donation of material from the Stroh Brewery Company. One staffer is underway with processing the photographic and object collections, while the other has completed an inventory of over 2,000 film reels, video cassettes, and audio tapes, and has begun digitizing these materials.
- Our constantly growing online collection grew to encompass 45,975 items, and was searched 127,524 times by visitors from around the globe.
- Meanwhile our Detroit Video History Archive Youtube page remains wildly popular, logging 37,828 hours of watch time and 361,707 views.
- Items from our photographic and AV collections were licensed for use in DPTV's *Great Lakes Now*, the documentary films *Detroit We Day* and *Sons of Detroit*, the NEA's Jazz Masters awards, the BET series *Diarra From Detroit*, season 3 of the Starz series *BMF*; the Ed Sullivan documentary *Sunday Best*, the PBS documentary series *Gospel*, the German-produced documentary *Techno Rush*, the series *Hotels By Design*, the HBO series *Hard Knocks*, and the folk music documentary *The Nine Lives of Barbara Dane*.



The Stroh Brewery collection contains 2-D, 3-D, and video items from the company's history.

- Our visuals also appeared in a performance by jazz violinist Regina Carter-Garnett, a book about Sts. Peter and Paul Jesuit Church, and a Bedrock Detroit publication.
- Through a partnership with Bedrock, we helped create an exhibit installed in the lobby of the newly renovated Book Tower featuring stories about the building's construction and the Book family.
- For the last decade or so we have partnered with Macomb Community College's Lorenzo Cultural Center to provide hundreds of artifacts for their big annual exhibit. This past year we took over creating the exhibit and will be creating a custom exhibit compromised of a blending of two of our traveling exhibits this coming January.
- We recorded an interview with legendary Red Wings coach Scotty Bowman in the *1997: Detroit Red Wings* exhibition and captured his handcasting for *Legends Plaza.*
- The Highland Park Historical Commission embarked on an oral history project at the direction of Highland Park Mayor and City council. Curatorial staff agreed to consult with the oral historians on process and interview questions. Our oral history archive will be the repository for these collected stories.
- We added 144 donations totaling 6,384 new objects to the collection.
- 13 new loans of 258 objects were made to institutions as diverse as the Michigan Maritime Museum, Westshore Community College (Ludington, MI), and the Textile and Needlework Guild. The 13 new loans complimented the 39 existing loans already on the books at the beginning of FY23, or a total of 53 loans to other institutions.

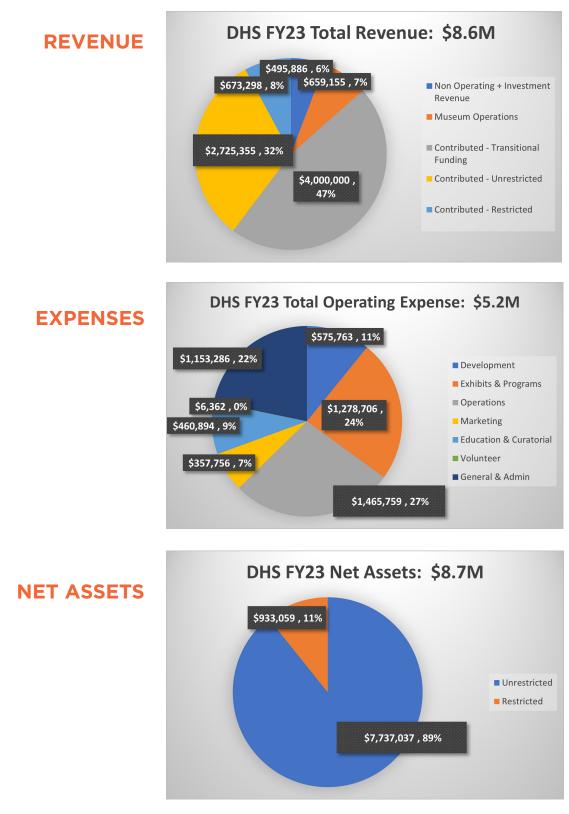


Two new staff members were hired to work with our ArcEye camera system with the help of an IMLS grant.

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Combined Revenue and Expense information for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023.



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The Annual Lost Mariners Remembrance featured international participants, including the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards, Detroit Police and Fire Departments, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



A Juneteenth celebration in partnership with the Soul of Philanthropy Michigan featured the Urban Arts Orchestra.

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\$25,000-\$30,000

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Microplastics: Here, There, and Everywhere opened on Earth Day at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. It was created in partnership with University of Michigan researchers.



Michigan Poet Laureate Nandi Comer led a workshop for young writers at our MLK Family Day event in June.

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