

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 10, 2019, 1:45 – 3:00 pm
Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Jil Womack Harris, Chair
Betty Neal Crutcher, Vice Chair
Lynette Allston
Maura Bisceglia
Carol Ann Bischoff
Kenneth Dye
Anne Edwards
Cherry Gardner
Carolyn Garner, Foundation Liaison
Suzy Szasz Palmer
Jim Klaus, Foundation Co-President, Ex-Officio

Absent:

Kelly Bisogno, Department of Education
Gil Bland
Satya Rangarajan
Jennifer Sisk, Foundation Liaison
Rupa Tak
Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Ex-Officio
Lilo Ukrop, Foundation Co-President, Ex-Officio

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Jeffrey Allison
Caprice Bragg
Natasha Campbell
Cammy Carleton
Lori Coffey
Celeste Fetta
Jody Green
Deb Love (representing Cynthia Norwood)
Thomas Lunsford
Courtney Morano
Hossein Sadid
Michael Taylor

I. CALL TO ORDER

At 1:47pm, Chair Jil Harris called the meeting to order and welcomed Committee members.

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion: proposed by Ms. Joan Brock and seconded by Ms. Carol Ann Bischoff to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2019 Education Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

III. VMFA ON THE ROAD/STATEWIDE UPDATES

Jeffrey Allison, Manager of Statewide Programs and Exhibitions and the Paul Mellon Collection Educator, provided an update of VMFA on the Road, noting that 11,033 children visits the ArtMobile during the Virginia Children's Book Festival on October 16-18, 2019. Mr. Allison read into the record a quote from Juanita Giles, Director of the Virginia Children's Book Festival, which is attached below. He then noted that the attendance since VMFA on the Road's launch in October of 2018 has reached 167,501 visitors.

IV. VMFA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Allison then introduced the new fellowship coordinator, Natasha Campbell, who noted that the museum received more than 550 applications for 24 fellowship awards. She reported that next year will be the 80th anniversary of the fellowship.

It was also noted during this time that Mr. Jeffrey Allison had just been named a *Richmond Times Dispatch* "Person of the Year."

V. EDUCATION UPDATES

Director of Education Celeste Fetta then reported on the tour guide recruitment process, noting that 96 guides have been selected with a diverse pool of participants. She then reported that more than 1,700 students and teachers have been served by the Evans Distance Learning program from July to November of this year. Additionally, she stated that renovations of the Studio School had been completed over the summer, and she thanked the buildings and grounds team at the museum for their help with the process. She then responded to several questions surrounding the retention of docents, requirements, training, and more regarding the tour guides for the museum.

Next, Courtney Morano, Interpretation Manager, reviewed where Early Childhood Education fell within her organizational chart, and then introduced Lori Coffey, the Early Childhood Education Coordinator. Ms. Coffey noted that Early Childhood Education is inclusive of children ages 3 months to 5 years old, and that they have classes across the museum—including in the Art Education Center, the galleries, and the sculpture garden. She noted that the program includes classes, camps, group visits, and an annual student exhibition. Additionally, she reviewed the staff members within the department as well at the museum's Reggio-Inspired philosophy surrounding early childhood education. Ms. Coffey also reviewed the history of the program from 2000 to present day; she also noted that in FY20 6,505 children and caregivers have been served through 333 programs and 71 group visits. Ms. Coffey then responded to several questions regarding the process for scholarship distribution for attending these classes as well as

funding. This led Ms. Coffey to note that the program receives support through strategic partners, including the Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Foundation, Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond, and more. She reported that in 2020 the team plans to work with the International Rescue Committee to reach newcomer populations, have their first paid internship in Education, and to hire for an early childhood assistant position. She then reviewed the recent renovations of the space thanks to Mrs. Mary Gray Shockey. Lastly, she reported that team hopes to become the leaders in the field of Early Childhood Museum Education and to emphasize group visits and curiosity camps.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Harris adjourned the meeting at 2:38pm for a tour of the Early Childhood Education Classroom in the Art Education Center.

Recorded by: Jody Green
Administrative and Project Coordinator, Director's Office

Quote from Juanita Giles, Director of the Virginia Children's Book Festival:

“The moment I learned the VMFA was introducing a new ArtMobile, I knew we had to have it at the VCBF. The old ArtMobile had a profound effect on my own life, and I'll never forget when it came to Farmville in the early 1990s. The exhibition was *The Art of Graphic Design*, and I've never been able to shake the flaming butterflies in Yusaku Kamekura's *Hiroshima Appeals* poster or the bullet hole in Bradbury Thomas' design of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. That exhibition has never left me, and I knew I wanted the kids attending the VCBF to have that same opportunity. The VMFA's ArtMobile was situated to be the first thing kids saw when they disembarked at the 2019 VCBF, and that was by design. Most of the 11,000 attending children are from Title I schools, and many have never left their home county, much less visited a college campus or been to an art museum. While the VCBF's mission is to create lifelong readers, integral to that mission is expanding horizons, showing what is possible, and setting the stage for rich and fulfilling life, replete with inspiration and new experiences. Imagine an eight-year-old child who hates reading, has rarely left her rural county, and for whom art is a luxury. This eight-year-old gets off her school bus and is immediately met with the VMFA's ArtMobile and its friendly staff. 'Welcome,' they say. 'Come in, you are welcome.' I can't thank Jeffrey Allison, the ArtMobile staff, and the VMFA at large for making this experience possible for the VCBF's children. We don't yet know what the ArtMobile's impact will be, and we may never fully know. It may be that that eight-year-old girl saw something she will remember for the next thirty years, or she may become an artist herself, or even a curator. What we do know is that the VMFA provided an incredible opportunity to thousands of children, and I am extremely grateful.”