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New Pivot for The New Children's Museum

Providing Art and Hope to Underserved Youth During the Pandemic

October 13, 2020 - The prolonged closure at The New Children's Museum has inspired a creative, new approach to bringing art and creativity into the community. After initially shifting to a virtual approach with online resources for families at home, the Museum's latest pivot includes reaching deeper into the community with unique programming.

"It is critical that we continually rethink how to deliver on our mission with our doors closed," said Tomoko Kuta, Deputy Director. "We have long-running partnerships with social service organizations, community centers and schools – and if they can't come to us, we have to figure out a way to bring art and creativity to them."

The arts-based children's museum recently launched **Think Play Create Learning Kits**, which include standards-based lesson plans, links to instructional videos and art supplies needed for hands-on activities. The learning kits enable the Museum to continue serving organizations that participate in their ongoing group visit programs. They currently have commitments to create, assemble and deliver over 17,000 kits to organizations throughout San Diego by the end of this academic year. The Museum is aggressively seeking additional funding so they can increase the number of students and families reached through the program.

"The group visits to The New Children's Museum were a highlight for the children and families of schools throughout the county," said Amy Gray, Arts Education and Community Programs Manager who oversees a large portion of the Museum's outreach efforts. "Many of the families we serve don't have access to art – or even own the most basic art supplies – so our learning kits have been extremely well received."

There are variations of the *Think Play Create Learning Kits* targeted at different ages and audiences. Recipients thus far include families at 10 social service organizations through the Museum's **pARTners in Creativity** program, seven community centers through their **Mass Creativity** program and thousands of students at Title I schools throughout San Diego County. The virtual school program, a variation of the kits designed to bring the Museum to students, received over 3,000 registrations within 72 hours of being announced.

"The opportunity for our most vulnerable students and families to be able to engage in creative work during these heavy/dark times is invaluable," said Dawn Miller, Lindsay Community School teacher. "We are so grateful for the powerful work the museum prioritizes to ensure our students are engaged in art that heals."

The Museum intends to reopen when it is safe to do so, and when capacity restrictions lift and allow for a larger number of visitors inside the highly interactive, hands-on museum. In the meantime, the Museum team is enthusiastically bringing art to students and families at home through their *Think Play Create Learning Kits*.

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Community Partner Recipients of Think Play Create Learning Kits

Barrio Logan College Institute
Camp HOPE
Casa Familiar
City Heights Library
High Tech Elementary North County
Lindsay Community School
Migrant Education
Monarch School
Ronald McDonald House Charities
San Diego Center for Children
Skyline Hills Library /Paradise Hills
Solutions for Change
South Bay Community Services
Support the Enlisted Project
The San Diego LGBT Center
Title I Schools
United Service Organizations
Vista Hill
Voices for Children
Words Alive

About The New Children's Museum

The New Children's Museum is a new model of children's museum whose mission is to stimulate imagination, creativity and critical thinking in children and families through inventive and engaging experiences with contemporary art. Located downtown, the Museum collaborates with contemporary artists to design and create art installations and educational programs for children. The Museum brings families together in a rich educational environment that fosters creativity — blending the best elements of children's museums, contemporary art museums and community resources. In 2018, the Museum celebrated its 35th year in San Diego and its 10th year as The New Children's Museum downtown. To learn more, visit thinkplaycreate.org or follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).