



The Wonder Workshop Children's Museum

Spring Issue



506 S. 4th St.
Manhattan, KS 66502

(785) 776-1234
wonder@kansas.net



Dates to Remember:

Open House:

Saturday, April 12th
10:00 am –
3:00 pm

Think Big! Summer Camp:

Monday – Friday
June 2nd –
July 25th

Contact for more information:



From the Directors Desk

Spring is just around the corner and if I had my way, we would be enjoying the warmer temperatures right now. Yet, the grass will be turning greener in more ways than one in just a few more weeks. We are finally at the point of reopening our museum here in Manhattan, wahoo! In 2004, we had to close our doors when our building was sold due to budget cuts for USD 383, who owned the building we were occupying. But the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum's Director and Board of Directors, kept the "Faith!" It is finally paying off.

Many of you have given your support through monetary donations and/or by volunteering in our programs or helping to restore our current facility for many years. We know which side our bread is buttered. Thank you, Thank you! We move forward from here by presenting new exhibits, programs and staff to our community. Within these pages we introduce you to our wonderful staff. You have reminded me over and over throughout the years, how important it is for our community to have the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum. I've been around the block for too many years to count and I've had the opportunity to make a lot of friends and witness Wonder Workshop children of the 1990's, become adults. One such kid, by the name of Milly Foto, came into our program when she attended 1st grade at Lee Elementary School. She didn't speak a word of English at the time because she had come from Africa with her parents. Within a year, she had a good grasp of our language. Milly is now in her second year of college in California. She wrote a compelling article for Black History Month for her college newspaper that we wish to share with you, with her permission. I think you will agree with me, whether you agree with her opinion or not, that she has developed into a bright young lady.

The folks I grew up with use to say, "Big things, come in small packages." It is our hope that you will have a big experience at our museum when you visit. It is and has been our most sincere desire to develop a family friendly, community centered museum for Manhattan, where everyone feels welcomed and leaves with an enriched experience. Most but not all of our exhibits are targeting children between the ages of 4 & 7 years old, even though we believe we having some things that younger & older children will enjoy too. Wonder Workshop will open April 12th with these exhibits; Hands Speak (sharing different ways we speak and work with our hands), Home is Where I Sleep (an African bedroom with Native & Latino American dioramas that share how these cultures put their children to bed at night), a glow in the dark hallway (you paint on the wall by using our flashlights), Artful Journey's (paint on easels, draw on walls with chalk, face paint...), and the Larry Weaver Science Room (circuits, magnets, dinosaurs...).

The last phase of exhibits is still under construction and that is our outdoor learning area. You can read more about this in the newsletter. While refurbishing our building last summer, there were a number of neighborhood children sitting in the hot sun with nothing to do. So we thought, since we must charge for visitors to come inside our facility, it would be neighborly to have a few free things to offer for kids who can't afford to come inside. Thus, we began our informal partnership with K-State's Landscape Architects. The cost estimate for this project is \$5,500. We still need your financial assistance to complete this project. Please send in your tax-deductible contribution to help us provide for all of our children.

Richard Pitts



“As each child entered the Museum they scattered to check out each room. After they checked each room they settled in the room they found most interesting to them. After they completed the craft or hands on exhibits in their chosen room they went to the next room. I witnessed how each child took interest in everything. The painting room, story room, sleep room, The Hand Exhibit, science room and all the bench seats that had games, toys, dolls, puzzles and costumes they tried on. It was a fun afternoon. I had my 17-month-old granddaughter and she even found things that kept her busy. “

Diane Washington
Board Member/Volunteer

Angry Black Woman

I have lived my entire life trying to avoid being the *angry black woman* – the woman constantly ranting about the hardships and hurdles of being black in a “white society;” the woman always trudging around with a scowling face, cold and intimidating, for she does not want to let the world in; the woman who society avoids like the plague – and today, I will continue to avoid that misguided stereotype. Today, I am not an angry black woman. I am an *angry person*.

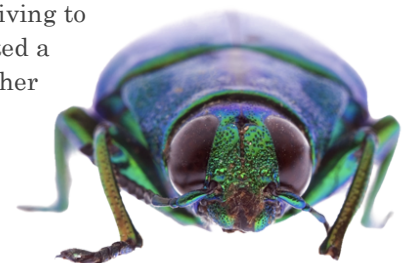
Person (n.): a human being regarded as an individual.

I am not ranting as a woman, or as a black person, or as a black woman, but rather, as a human being – an individual.

Let me start off the body of this letter by saying a few things about myself. Don’t write me off, don’t roll your eyes, and don’t assume anything. Just keep reading.

I emigrated from Cameroon to the United States at the age of five, and upon arriving in the wonderful state of Kansas; I quickly realized that I did not want to become the degraded image of black that had been painted and resented by my entirely white town. I worked hard to act white, look white, be white – I smiled from ear to ear when people would comment on how much of an ‘Oreo’ I was, how well-poised and well spoken I was, how they did not expect such manners from me. And I saw nothing wrong with the way I thought for a long time.

I moved from the white upper middle class suburbs of New York and then to the same in North Carolina and Illinois, always adapting to the different cultures and landscapes – always striving to be whiter. It was not until my father, a double Ph.D. and the best man I know, dated a white woman and was denied her hand by her mother. Her mother preferred that her daughter go back to a verbally and emotionally abusive ex-husband than be with my father because he is black. It was not until someone assumed that I was at a birthday party to watch the children, rather than as a guest, that I stopped and asked myself: “What exactly is being white or being black?” I was just





Science At Home

DIY Play Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 C. flour
- 1 T. Vegetable Oil
- 1/4 C. Salt
- 1/2 C. Boiling Water
- Food Coloring

Instructions:

Combine ingredients in a large bowl and knead until it forms into play dough.

Can be stored in plastic wrap, or any storage containers.

Creating a playground that is fun, interactive and educational for the kids at the Wonder Workshop!

With the help of graduate students from the School of Architecture at Kansas State University, we are pleased to announce that we will be adding an outdoor exhibit to the Wonder Workshop.

The Plan:

There are two entrances to the playground, one that is open to the public and one that services the Wonder Workshop itself. The public entrance facing the street employs a hedgerow for privacy and safety for the children inside the play area. A trellised archway leads you into the space.

The mystery and excitement of walking through this living tunnel draws kids in to explore. A main pathway runs the length of the playground, undulating up and down and curving around, creating interest and different experiences through the journey.

Design Intent:

In keeping with the mission statement of the Wonder Workshop, the goal of this project is to create an outdoor area where kids can learn, play, and grow. This will be a place where children can have fun while still learning about the world around them in hands-on ways. To accomplish this, we created a playground with adaptable spaces for learning, a variety of activities for playing, and abundant natural elements for growing.

A bamboo space frame will be used as play equipment. The strength of durability of this material makes it ideal as a play element. All materials used in this playgroup concept – wood, bamboo, stone, and living plants – are natural materials with varying tactile qualities, allowing the kids to learn about and explore the natural world.

As excited as we are about this new exhibit, we are still looking for funding resources in order to execute this plan. Please contact us with any information in regards to any help, whether that is money, work, etc.



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perpetuating and reinforcing the stereotypes and categories that I had so long been trying to avoid.

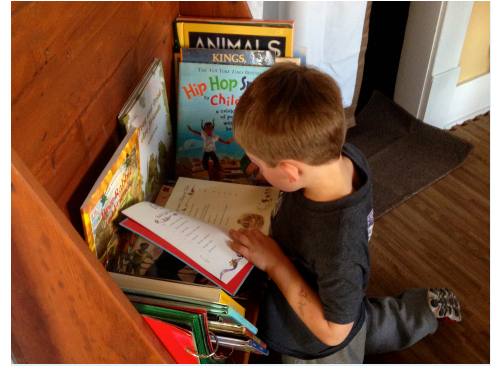
But that is not the point of this letter. I gave you my background because, although I find it ridiculous that I must explain myself and prove to you that I am not like the “angry black woman” that you so look down upon, I feel as though I have to in order to prevent you from discrediting my voice. And my voice will be heard. Just keep reading.

My story is not just my story, it is the story of so many people, yet the gravity of my experiences have never been made so apparent as they were today, when a close friend suggested that I lighten my skin in order to better accommodate to society. In order to be successful, whether romantically or professionally, I had to lighten my skin – it was that simple to her. While that statement was certainly alarming to me as a black woman, it was more alarming to me as a human. Have we really come to this point?

I do not live under a rock. I know that appearances matter and will always matter. There is no going around that. I, admittedly, judge people based on a first glance, and I critique people’s dress and mannerisms. I am not pointing the finger, for I am guilty, as well. That statement, though – “You could just lighten your skin to increase your chances of being accepted into a wider pool of people” – was so deeply rooted in ignorance that I could not let it go. I am speaking up.

Let’s start with the “black” aspect of it. For what better time to address this issue than during Black History Month? Even within the black community, having lighter skin is more beautiful. Light black people sit with light black people, and the same is true of darker people. Such was apparent at a predominantly black gathering that one of my friends recently attended. We see, however, that this trend is not rooted in our minds alone, but in patterns of history.

Lighter skinned slaves had the opportunity to do more “domestic” work in the house, while darker skinned slaves worked in the fields; some Historically Black Colleges and Universities implemented a “brown paper bag rule” for admissions in which if your skin was not lighter than a paper bag, you would not gain admission; “passing” as white was a point of pride within the black community; darker skinned celebrities are seldom seen on covers of magazines or in popular films; women in my home country of Cameroon have bathed themselves in skin-whitening creams for years in order to achieve that



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(Continued)

“European look.” The patterns are there. Just keep reading.

The idea of beauty itself is one that all women can identify with. There is one kind of beauty, and that is tall, skinny, and white with straight hair, straight teeth, and preferably light eyes. As women, we primp ourselves for hours striving to achieve that perfect magazine cover appearance. We starve ourselves and go to the gym to get that bikini body, we pile makeup on our faces to hide any blemishes, we make sure our hair is always properly groomed, and we spend exorbitant amounts of money on clothes and shoes every year – all for what? Essentially, to be accepted by society.

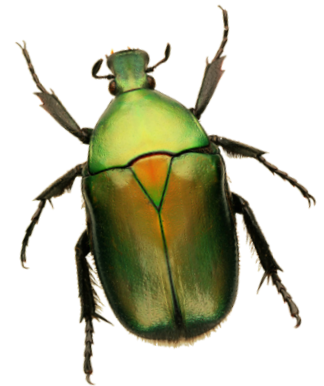
Had I possessed the growing problem of lack of self-confidence and esteem that so many young women face today, had I not had the self-confidence and self-esteem that so many young women face today, had I not had the self-confidence and self-esteem that my parents taught me to have at a very young age, I would have taken her advice seriously and gotten started on a skin-lightening regimen. I would have truly believed that I was not beautiful, and that the only road to success was to conform. Instead, I turned around and said to her, “HELL NO, I AM CONFIDENCE ENOUGH IN MY OWN SKIN TO TURN AROUND AND TELL PEOPLE LIKE YOU,” with both middle fingers up, mind you, “NO F*CKS ARE GIVEN. I AM BEAUTIFUL.” And I urge all women to gain the confidence to do the same.

“I mean, you have a computer, you have a cellphone, you go to college – those are all forms of conformity, so why not?” was her reply. Why not? Because I am so much more than the color of my skin, or the way I dress, or the music I listen to.

This, then, becomes a problem of humanity. At the end of the day, we are all human beings—we are all individuals. In a world that constantly bombards us with images of how we should be, finding our individuality and our voice is difficult. In a world where having a strong, opposing voice is twice as difficult. I am not shaming “white culture” or “white privilege,” for I realize the complexity of our individual experiences. Individual being the key word – “A single human being as distinct from a

group, class, or family.” We are not our race, we are not our ethnicity, and we are not our socio-economic status. We are individuals. Individuals that can come together and promote discourse and disruption within our community.

I have chose to write and open, non-anonymous letter because it is time for a change. The closed-mindedness present within society, and within the little microcosm of society that is the Claremont Colleges, is something that must be discussed and reformed. It is time to start realizing that our superficial and our deeper differences are what make us beautiful.



Imagine a world where people did not question the status quo, if their only desire were to be part of the majority. Imagine a world where there was only one-way to be right, and all other variations were shunned. Imagine a world where everyone accepted suggestions such as “you could just lighten your skin to increase your chances of being accepted into a wider pool of people.”

As students at institutions of high learning, as people who have been exposed to people of different backgrounds (maybe not at home, but at least here), as educated individuals, and as the leaders of the future, I expect a lot more.

If not for me, then for the millions of little girls that have had similar experiences; for the millions of people that feel that, because they don’t fit into a particular mold, they are wrong; for the millions of people that lack the confidence to speak up. Let’s change the way we think.

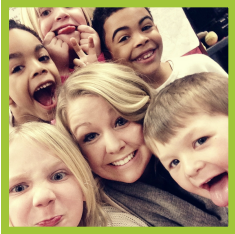
Regards,

Milly Fotso

Claremont McKenna College ‘16

Meet the leaders of Hooked on Clubs!

Valerie Hampton



My name is Valerie Hampton and I am a senior at Kansas State University majoring in Family Studies and Human Services while also minoring in Non-Profit Leadership Studies. I am very honored and pleased to announce that with the start of the New Year of 2014, I became the intern for the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum. One could describe me as the small town girl from Spring Hill, KS with big dreams for this world.

As the intern for the Wonder Workshop, along side Mr. Richard Pitts, I run the Facebook page, help with the after school program, attend meetings, help with public relations, coordinate the volunteers, etc. Thus far, the Wonder Workshop has far exceeded my expectations. The knowledge that I have gained from this experience has been tremendous. The relationships that I have created with the adults and children of this organization have been nothing short of a blessing.

I look forward to helping to strengthen the foundation of the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum, as we sneak up on our opening day of April 12th, to the general public. My vision is that a safe, yet fun, environment has been created for children here that aids in furthering their education and igniting excitement within them. Our children are our future and it is our job to prepare them for excellence.

Elaine Gonzalez



My name is Elaine Gonzalez. I come from a small town in SW Kansas name Sublette. If no one has heard of it, it is 30 minutes away from Garden City, Liberal, and 45 minutes from Dodge City. I came to Kansas State University to major in Education with an emphasis in Spanish. I have always loved Education. Since I was a little girl, I liked helping the teachers with anything they needed help with. So, I stuck with the passion I grew up with.

I have graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor in Science. I am currently doing what I love, which is helping and educating students. I am not teaching Spanish. However, I am a Para at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. What I contribute to Wonder Workshop is diversity education during our after school program called "Hooked on Clubs". I help the students explore different cultures, while learning about them, and embracing the diversity of the United States. Many students do not see what is in our world because they haven't been outside of Kansas. I want to help them discover what life has to offer and how to deal with it. Working at the Children's Museum helps me, help them, and discover new things.

Wende Torres



Imagine young children with big smiling faces going from room to room at the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum on 4th Street, enjoying everything they see! That was the case this past Tuesday, when we took the after school kids to the museum for a tryout. They were playing and exploring for over an hour, not wanting to go home when their parents came to pick them up. It was a lovely sight to see! It's very heart warming knowing that the exhibits are really something the children enjoyed after knowing the hours it took to create them.

Personally, I was in the art room and I can tell you that the children were very creative and proud of the work they did. In fact, I wish we could have framed some of their work for the walls. Not only did they paint pictures but they also did face painting, which was a big hit with all the kids. The boys were trying to look grown-up by painting beards and mustaches on their faces. Some painted their faces to look like clowns, while others wore costumes and became American Indian or African girls and boys.

When I ventured into some of the other rooms, I didn't see one child doing nothing. The children all found various projects, and exhibits to explore. I personally feel blessed to be part of the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum, as a Board member and volunteer. Because of what they are doing and will be doing for the kids in the Manhattan area, I will be along for the ride for many years to come! Again, it warms your heart to see the children play, explore, and just have fun learning.

Mindy Dike



Wonder Workshop Children's Museum, is a wonderful place for children to grow, learn, and explore. Through hands-on learning, children are able to expand their minds and discover their creativity. This is a place where children explore what they are passionate about, and what they may want to pursue as they mature. The skills, confidence and knowledge gained at the Wonder Workshop are qualities that will help carry children through the rest of grade school, and into a bright future.

I am passionate about the role I play in the Wonder Workshop team. One day of the week, I aid another supervisor in art lessons. Another day of the week, I am responsible for planning a science lesson and activity. Science is something I've always been passionate about, and I look forward to working with the kids every week.

Interactive art and science lessons get the children involved and excited about learning. To me, there is nothing better than a child positively responding to an activity I prepared. When they start asking questions, and get that look of curiosity in their eyes, it means we've done something right. The more we can peak their interest, the more they will learn and grow. Knowledge is power, and I like to believe we are giving them the power to succeed.