

The future home of the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum is located at 506 S. 4th Street, Manhattan, Kansas

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Wonder Workshop

October 2012



After eight years of working hard to find a home back in Manhattan and we finally did it! The new location is a fixer upper but when it's all said and done it will be ours for the next 20 years rent free. The Bethel AME Church owns the house but has agreed to lease it to the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum for the next 20 years rent free. We will be solely

responsible for making the many repairs needed to bring it up to city codes. It needs a roof, plumbing, heating & cooling, painting, etc but once it is all done we are free to open our doors in the Little Apple. This means for our community another place in town where families can come to play and learn through the arts, sciences, and humanities! Can we do it

alone? No. Please be excited with us and help us make a great Children's Museum by donating today!



Table of Contents:

Interview with David Griffin	2
Art activity	5
Homer's Big Stories	6
Up coming events	7

Wonder Workshop Board of Directors



2012

David Griffin, Sherry White, Diane Washington, Jessica Hedgecock, Terry Jones, Kelly Loub, Jan Stepp, and Jeffery Stepp

Advisory Committee: Nathan: Nathaniel Thompson-Weaver, Joshua Runyan, Kate Taylor, Gary Conrad and Jack Oviatt



An Interview with Dr. David Griffin Sr.

While in the office of Dr. David Griffin, the Assistant Dean/Director for the Center of Student and Professional Services early one Thursday morning in August. Richard Pitts interviewed him about his current position and why he is on the Board of Directors of the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum.

How long have you been in your current position here at K-State?

This is my second week in this position, prior to this I was the Assist Dean for Diversity in the College of Education and held that position for eight years. And I still hold that position for the next year, I'll have a dual role.

What made you want to pursue this line of work?

Actually it probably started when I was in the eighth grade. My dad was career air-force man and in eighth grade living in Florida it was all segregated. All my friends were Black and as a matter of fact I didn't get a chance to speak to a person my age (of a different race) until I was in the ninth grade. That was only because we moved from Orlando, Florida to Europe. That was my first encounter with other individuals who were not of Color and that's when I began to understand the richness of diversity in its larger sense.

I imagine that was a cultural and racial shock for you since you may have been placed into an environment where you were not in the majority because of your Skin Color and perhaps often the only person of your race.

In my class I was the only person of Color in the Ninth Grade.

What was that like, were you intimidated or were you received by your classmates with open arms?

I was not intimidated. My concern was exactly that, would I be received with open arms. All of my instructors up to eighth grade were Black and at this point all of my instructors were White. My fellow students were all White there might have been 3 or 4 other students in the entire school that were of Color and one of those students was my sister.

At this time were you ever a victim of racism?

Somewhat but for the most part it was a pleasant experience. I can remember this, a young man by the name of David Prado, this was in ninth grade, that was a few days ago (laughter). David was hispanic and he was the first one in my class that came up to befriend me.

Do you think students at K-State need to have a diversity course?

More so because many of them don't realize it. When I came to K-State almost 22 years ago in many cases I was the first instructor of Color that they have ever had. That was a culture shock for them. There is no doubt that what we do in our training program for teacher education is to prepare knowledgeable, ethical, and caring decision makers. And that encompasses diversity proficiencies. Knowing about those proficiencies when they leave here no matter what part of the country or world they go. One thing is for sure diversity is inescapable.

Is diversity an important part of a child's growth?

First hand experience, my background as a child gave me an opportunity number one to be faced with the importance of diversity, not even knowing that "This is Diversity." It was as if I knew this is different, I knew that my situation was different, I knew folks look different than I do, I knew people dressed different than I do. You see when I was growing up we moved all over Europe, we stayed in Italy, we stayed in France, Germany and England for large periods of time. The richness of what I was thrust into changed my entire life. It helped me be the man that I am today. The Black Man that I am today and I have to give credit to God and to two people Mamie and Lenard my parents. They were way ahead of their time because they both grew up in very racist environments but they would not allow Al my older brother and my younger sister and I to hold prejudice. When we were away from them we kind of threw punches at people who said things to us but our upbringing helped us understand that Diversity is everywhere. It's just like air, it's everywhere, you can not escape it. To understand that, it hurts inside when I see young White babies raised in a hatred environment of White Supremacists, Klu Klux Klan and Citizens for Whites - these kids don't have a chance because that's how they're raised, raised to hate others. But it also happens in Black Families and Hispanic Families too that are raised to hate. So the richness of diversity is so important and critical and to the livelihood of young people. Because there use to be a time when you were an adult and you worked for a company and you couldn't get along with your Japanese coworker they'd say Griffin can't get along with that person so we'll move him to a different branch of the company. Now if you can't get along with someone they fire you, there's no place in the world for you to go. So specifically to answer your question Diversity is so wonderfully critical to the wholeness of success for the child that grows to become a woman or a man.

How are you affiliated with the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum?

Well I first met a young man way back in the dark ages by the name of Richard Pitts. It happened to be on the school grounds of Lee Elementary. My son was in Elementary School at the time and we were at their Cultural Bazar in the gym. We happen to meet Richard and his demeanor, and I'm serious about this was infatuating. When my son clings to somebody and I cling to somebody there's a measuring stick in it at least for us, that this is somebody we want to be connected with. Over the next year or so I began to see his name more, saw him at different activities and when I was given the opportunity when Wonder Workshop was formulating a board and I'm talking 15 years ago, I wanted to be a part of that. I wanted to give back to the community, not only give back but share in the community I lived in, that my son was a part of. So I became involved with Wonder Workshop initial because I wanted my son to be involved. An when given the opportunity to become a board member I jumped at that opportunity. Later on I was asked to be the chair of the board and I served in that capacity for a few years.

Where do you see Wonder Workshop Children's Museum going in 5 years?

Knowing what I know about Wonder Workshop my involvement with activities and its involvement holistically with the community I can see Wonder Workshop being a show piece in terms of, it's almost like the Negro League Baseball Museum, being that powerful. Obviously here in Manhattan, Kansas and obviously throughout the state of Kansas but beyond the state of Kansas where people will say "I hear about this Wonder Workshop, I hear about this Underground Railroad, I hear about the Science projects, the Math projects and the Nature projects that involve students and parents." I don't know of any other entity that matches that. I can see Wonder Workshop expanding its horizons in terms of a knowledge base beyond Kansas across America. And I say that not loosely, I truly mean that because I know what Wonder Workshop stands for. Years from now, and now that we have a structure back in the city of Manhattan the sky's the limit.

If you could change one thing about the Wonder Workshop what would that be?

Visibility. I would change it's visibility to greater heights. And that's going to happen, if I could change it right now I would wave my magic wand and say Poof there it is. But it's going to take a rebuilding time since the

physical structure has been missing in this city for a few years. Now that Wonder Workshop is back that presence or visibility will make a difference to so many families.

Tell me five things about the Wonder Workshop that you think people should know?

1. Wonder Workshop in my opinion has a caring Director and that's you Richard. And I really mean that Richard. When I was a high school principal people would say, "That school runs good it's the principal that's good or that school runs bad, it's the principal that's bad." It's the caring director that makes all the difference in the world.
2. Wonder Workshop is community centered. It keeps its pulse on the needs of the community in which it sits. I think the community centered nature of Wonder Workshop people should know about.
3. The third thing I want people to know about is that Wonder Workshop is Educationally Centered. I've been involved now for over fifteen years and it is totally educationally centered. From the standpoint that it works with kids from a holistic standpoint. It is not one dimensional. As a parent when my son David was involved I knew he was going to get socialization, I knew he would get a chance to explore nature, I knew he was going to be involved with science and he was going to be taught to speak proper english. And I knew he would be exposed to kids who did not speak english and see that they would be treated the same way as everyone else. So educationally centered is different than other wonderful activities in the city. You have other activities in the city but they're kind of one dimensional. Wonder Workshop is total inclusiveness.
4. Wonder Workshop is a not for profit organization, it's not for profit, it's non profit and everything and all things that Wonder Workshop does I think the community needs to understand that. It makes a difference when they say "Here's somebody doing something but they're doing it for money" and that's not bad but when you hear they are non profit and doing a great job for kids, it gives what they're doing more power with a deeper respect. And the benefits that our children are getting in this city is great. Our school district needs all the help it can get academically that goes beyond the school day, Wonder Workshop provides that.
5. This one is just as important as the other four and that is the Wonder Workshop is student and family friendly. It is a friendly environment and people want to know two things, "Is it friendly and is it safe?" It is parent, child and student friendly and it is a very safe environment. These are the five that I would lay my hat on.

I'm done David with my questions but is there any last comments you would like to make?

I would like to close by saying that my son benefitted from Wonder Workshop, graduated from K-State, he has his career now and a lot of his success came through being involved in Wonder Workshop. And I would say to parents if you want your child to be involved in an organization that yields positive benefits you better check out Wonder Workshop!

These children are exploring science!



Frankenstein Luminaries



What you'll need:

- Glass canning jars with lid bands
- Acrylic paint: green, white, black
- Paintbrush
- Large, medium, and small round sponge applicators
- Black marker
- 2 metal nuts per jar
- Instant grab glue
- Clear gloss sealer spray

How to make it:

1. Remove tops from jars; remove lids from the bands and save them for another project.
2. Paint bands black and jars green; set aside to dry.
3. When dry, paint a second coat on the jars and have an adult spray the black bands with sealer spray. Set aside to dry.
4. Dip the large round sponge applicator into white paint and dot on the eyes to the front of the jar.
5. Mix a small amount of green paint with some white paint to make a light shade of green. Dip the small round applicator into the green paint and add the nose to the front of the jar.
6. While the eyes and nose are drying, take the black marker and lightly draw on stitches and a mouth on the face.
7. Use instant grab glue to attach a nut to the side of the jar. Allow it to dry for several minutes before turning the jar over and gluing a nut to the other side. Stand the jar up and let everything dry. You may need to check the nuts and make sure they are sticking. Simply press them back in place if need be.
8. Dip the medium round sponge applicator into black paint and add the pupils to the eyes. Allow them to dry completely.
9. Have a grown up spray the jars with gloss sealer spray, each jar and black band should get three coats, wait 30 minutes between coats.
10. When everything is dry, screw the black bands back onto the jars and add a tea light candle. Wait until it gets dark and watch them glow!



Short Stories from Homer!

Why So Crabby?

Paul Wearing was a tinnier here in Salina and a very dear friend. Paul could tell a story as well as anyone I ever knew. Once he was telling about a time right after the war when heaps of vets would congregate at the local beer parlors when a stranger came in one night. The stranger walked up to the bar and told the bartender in a loud voice to set up a beer for everyone in the place. Everyone gathered around the stranger and patted him on the back and told him how much they appreciated the beer. The stranger looked at the bartender and said, "I'd like to buy you one too." The bartender told him that he usually didn't drink while working, but since the stranger was so happy and made everyone else in the place happy he would have a beer with him. After a while the stranger said to the bartender, "Let's set 'em up again." The bartender said, "Fine, but you haven't paid for that last round yet." The stranger replied, "Oh! I don't have any money." The bartender came around the bar and grabbed the stranger by the seat of the pants and nap of the neck and took him to the door and literally threw him out into the street. Paul said on the way out the door the stranger said, "Well, if I had known you were going to be so nasty I wouldn't have bought you one."

Paul, Verna, Retta and I crashed the Eagles new year's eve party one new years eve. We had a great time and ran into heaps of people we knew. My office was right across the street from the eagles lodge. They had excellent lunches there for the members. I would go there for lunch quite regularly. I went so often that regular members would hold the door open for me. Then it happened. One day while having lunch one of the members came up to me and ask if I had ever considered going through the chairs. When I told him no, he said he would like to nominate me and for me to think about it. I wasn't even a member! That brought hanging around the Eagles Lodge to a screeching halt.

September 15th to October 15th is Hispanic American History Month

Cesar Chavez (1927 - 1993)

Cesar was a Mexican American Labor organizer and the Head of United Farm Workers, AFL-

CIO. His efforts resulted in major improvements

for farm workers in California and Arizona, including secret ballots for union elections, improved housing, health benefits and wages. He made people around the United States more aware of migrant farm workers' problems. He was the second Hispanic to receive the Medal of Freedom Award.



Miriam Colon (1945-)

Miriam is the founder and director of the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater. She's an innovator whose goal it was to bring Hispanic Theater to audiences throughout the world. She has extensive experience in film, TV, and stage performance.



Up coming events for the Wonder Workshop!

Underground Railroad Tour Saturday, October 20th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm (\$25 per person in our van or \$20 per person in your own car).

Soul Food Dinner (fundraiser), November 8th from 6-8 PM (\$10 per ticket)

Contact us for tickets or more information: 785-776-1234

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