



For Immediate Release
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ScienceWorks Wins Grant Award for Inspiring Minds Program Wednesday, May 30th

ASHLAND, OREGON

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1500 East Main Street, Ashland, Oregon

From kindergarten to twelfth grade, only ten percent of a child's lifetime is spent in school. The question then is what are children, and their families, doing the other ninety percent of the time? According to ScienceWorks Hands-on Museum executive director Chip Lindsey, a goal of ScienceWorks is to have families spending their time exploring and learning at the museum. On Wednesday, May 30th, ScienceWorks Hands-on Museum will accept a grant award of \$15,150 from the Oregon Community Foundation Reed and Carolee Walker Fund that will help families spend more time exploring and learning during their free time. The Gordon Elwood Foundation, City of Ashland and other funders are also helping to fund the pilot program.

"One of the functions of non-profits in society is to hold onto the bigger picture, and partner with other organizations and foundations that are doing the same," Lindsey said. "The Oregon Community Foundation, Walker Fund, Gordon Elwood Foundation, City of Ashland and of course, Head Start, are all visionaries. We are happy to be part of the team helping to build stronger communities through families learning together."

Head Start, Lindsey said, is a great example of an organization that is doing tremendous work. "Head Start has known for a long time that the way to change a child's life is to work with the whole family," Lindsey said. The new Inspiring Minds program at ScienceWorks is a partnership between the museum and Southern Oregon Head Start Centers aimed at encouraging families to spend as much time as possible at the museum learning about science. Each Head Start Center initially visits ScienceWorks on a field trip. ScienceWorks staff then collaborate with the individual centers to host a special free family science night at the museum. The museum opens its doors for the Head Start Center teachers, children and their families. During the evening, families have a chance to play and explore the museum, meet the staff and become acquainted with all ScienceWorks has to offer – from fun hands-on exhibits to great summer camps. "For many of the families, it may have been their first chance to spend time together at the museum," Lindsey said. For some, Lindsey notes, it is a chance to discover something they never knew about their child – that they like science, or love lizards or having fun figuring out puzzles. For the parents of very young children, they discover that the museum has a special area set aside for toddlers and preschoolers, where parents can relax while children explore.

As a follow-up to the family night, each family is given a free membership, allowing unlimited access to the museum for a full year. The staff of the museum and the Head Start Centers encourage the families to use their membership as much as possible.

“Head Start is a comprehensive program – not only a terrific pre-school experience for children but also a learning lab for the whole family,” Head Start Family and Community Partnership Manager Felicity Elworthy said. “This collaboration with ScienceWorks has been a great program for Head Start families; we’re very interested to see what evolves with their ongoing use of the museum.”

According to Lindsey, if the program proves to be a success, the museum will explore expanding into creating similar programs with Title One schools in the region. “Teachers are trying to do a lot in that ten percent of a child’s life,” Lindsey said. “It is our job to come alongside and enhance the work the teachers are doing in the classroom – creating fun, creative places for kids to learn about science outside of school as well as in school.”

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ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum is a non-profit educational science center that has been serving the Rogue Valley region for nearly ten years. Located at 1500 East Main Street in Ashland, the museum is home to more than 100 exhibits, and hosts themed weekends, and ongoing fun, educational, science programs for all ages year-round. The mission of the museum is to inspire wonder and stimulate creative exploration through fun, interactive science and arts. For more information, call (541) 482-6767 or visit www.scienceworksmuseum.org.