



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-20-19-0499-19
Project Category: Community Anchors & Catalysts

Children's Museum of the East End

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$153,077
Amount of cost share:	\$187,200

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2020 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2019 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the [FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

ABSTRACT

The Children’s Museum of the East End (CMEE), in Eastern Long Island, requests \$153,077 from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to develop educational programming and cultural resources for a satellite location in the hamlet of Riverside, which is 25 miles away from CMEE’s home in Bridgehampton, NY. With an unemployment rate of 17%, almost 25% of residents living in poverty, and 80% of school children receiving free or reduced lunch, Riverside is the most economically distressed community on all of Long Island.

Traveling from its Bridgehampton location, which features 7,000 square feet of exhibition and programming space, CMEE educators currently provide much-needed evening programming for families in Riverside three times per week in a temporary facility. Support from the IMLS will enable the Children’s Museum to expand its programming in Riverside year round in a permanent 4,000-square-foot location. Entitled **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**, this project has been designated part of the Town of Southampton’s *Riverside Revitalization Action Plan*, which is intended to “create jobs and generate tax revenue by transforming the hamlet into a gateway to the East End and yield significant socioeconomic benefits to a community long underserved.”

The Children’s Museum surveyed families and other community members in Riverside to determine what kind of educational services they wanted to see presented at the new museum in Ludlam Avenue Park. They identified six types of offerings:

- An indoor playground where toddlers and young children could challenge themselves and work on their gross motor development.
- Early childhood classes and services during the morning for families with babies and toddlers.
- School field trips and Afterschool programs that enhance the school curriculum.
- Summer camp for children in the community, especially because there are no other affordable options.
- Evening programs that families could attend after work, similar to the classes CMEE offers at the Riverside Rediscovered office.
- On weekends, community events and workshops for families. During nice weather, these events would take place outside in the Park.

The Children’s Museum@Riverside will help CMEE fulfill its mission “to spark imagination and foster learning for children of all backgrounds and abilities and to build strong connections within the East End community by providing playful experiences” and achieve a primary objective in the Museum’s Strategic Plan.

Project Justification

The Children’s Museum of the East End (CMEE), in Eastern Long Island, requests \$153,077 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to develop educational programming and cultural resources for a satellite location in the hamlet of Riverside. Located 25 miles away from CMEE’s home in Bridgehampton, NY, Riverside is the most economically distressed community on all of Long Island, with an unemployment rate of 17%, almost 25% of residents living in poverty, and 80% of school children receiving free or reduced lunch.

Traveling from its Bridgehampton location, which features 7,000 square feet of exhibition and programming space, CMEE educators currently provide much-needed evening programming for families in Riverside three times per week in a temporary facility. Support from the IMLS will enable the Children’s Museum to expand its programming in Riverside year round in a permanent 4,000-square-foot location. Entitled **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**, this project will help CMEE fulfill its mission “to spark imagination and foster learning for children of all backgrounds and abilities and to build strong connections within the East End community by providing playful experiences” and achieve a primary objective in the Museum’s Strategic Plan. **The Children’s Museum@Riverside** has been designated part of the Town of Southampton’s *Riverside Revitalization Action Plan*, which is intended to “create jobs and generate tax revenue by transforming the hamlet into a gateway to the East End and yield significant socioeconomic benefits to a community long underserved.”

Like several other children’s museums, including Brooklyn, Minnesota, and Richmond, CMEE has realized that decentralized growth is the most effective way to serve its entire community. After an analysis of visitor data including the area’s demography and geography, Museum staff determined that CMEE was serving only 1/3 of families in the region. By creating a satellite at the root of Eastern Long Island’s “Twin Forks,” the Museum will have a strategically important location to increase its audience dramatically.

To help study the viability of a satellite site in Riverside, CMEE staff met with local community members, including the Board of the Flanders, Riverside, Northampton Community Association (FRNCA) and members of the local PTA. They emphasized that Riverside residents felt that Bridgehampton was too far to visit regularly. They pointed out that Riverside – unlike other communities – had no cultural activities for young children. Museum staff realized it needed to have a site based within the community, which residents could view as their own cultural asset.

Although Bridgehampton and Riverside are part of the same Township, the 25 miles that separate them are practically insurmountable for most of Riverside’s inhabitants. Limited public transit means that many people rely on walking as their primary mode of transportation. In fact, the percentage of people in Riverside who walk to work is more than twice the national average. In addition, residents face income and language barriers to accessing the Museum. For example, two thirds of Riverside children come from Spanish-speaking families. And while the median annual household income for Suffolk County as a whole is over \$88,000, it is only \$37,292 for Riverside.

The catalyst for **The Children’s Museum@Riverside** was a visit to the Museum by Sean McLean of Renaissance Downtowns, the master developer that partnered with Southampton Town to revitalize Riverside. To determine what kind of development the residents of Riverside needed and would support, Renaissance Downtowns had started “Riverside Rediscovered” and hired Siris Barrios as Community Liaison.

The Town of Southampton has produced five planning studies for Riverside during the last 17 years, but none of these efforts emphasized employing arts and cultural programming as a strategy for revitalizing the community. To begin counteracting the area’s high crime rates, Siris Barrios started gathering input from residents on how Riverside could feel more livable and safer. Through “door-knocking,” she conducted 93 in-depth interviews with members of the community. Of these, approximately 1/4 of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. When asked to inventory the community’s assets, residents listed the local public school (Phillips Avenue), churches, gas stations, a

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McDonald's, and the Riverwoods Retirement Village. According to residents, there was not a single arts or cultural organization located within the hamlet. (A report on this initiative is included in the appendices.)

Ms. Barrios reported that during these conversations, Riverside residents identified having a children's museum as a major priority for the community. Other priorities included an indoor recreation center and a skating rink. Ms. Barrios and Mr. McLean both have children who love CMEE so they asked Steve Long, President of the Museum to consider opening a satellite in Riverside. Since Riverside Rediscovered did not have a built-in constituency of young families like other organizations that partnered with CMEE, such as Long Island Head Start and the Shinnecock Indian Nation's preschool, Mr. Long was very cautious about presenting ongoing programming in the hamlet. To allay the Museum's concerns, Mr. McLean suggested running a pilot program to measure the community's interest in a children's museum. Since Riverside did not have any space designed for children's programming, he suggested presenting the pilot program in the Riverside Rediscovered conference room.

In March 2015, CMEE began offering a weekly art class for families with children between the ages of 2 and 5. Within 24 hours of announcing the program through door-knocking and social media, the sessions were filled with Riverside families. In fact, Riverside Rediscovered needed to start a waitlist. To accommodate the waitlist and determine whether non-residents would travel into Riverside for programming, CMEE launched several more classes beginning in September 2015 that attracted families from other parts of the East End. In addition to serving more well-to-do residents from Hampton Bays and Westhampton, the program hosted children from The Retreat's counseling offices in nearby Riverhead. (The Retreat provides services for families affected by domestic violence.)

After observing CMEE's classes at the Riverside Rediscovered offices and witnessing the success of the pilot project in bringing a diversity of families into the hamlet, members of FRNCA lobbied the Town of Southampton to create a space dedicated to children's programming and asked the Children's Museum to activate it. Town officials agreed and have planned the construction of a new 4,000-square-foot facility located in Riverside's Ludlam Avenue Park, which they anticipate completing by November 2019.

Ludlam Avenue Park was selected because it is one of the only Town-owned spaces in the hamlet. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated how arts and cultural programming can revitalize the use of parks and help build community involvement. Ludlam Avenue Park is ideal because it offers easily accessible outdoor space for programming and its proximity to Phillips Avenue School will help the Museum provide afterschool programming to a severely under-resourced institution.

The Children's Museum's plan to provide afterschool programming for Phillips Avenue School grew out of a telephone call from Shannon Kutner, the School's Social Worker. She read a newspaper article about the Museum's "Science Connections" program, which was funded by the IMLS, and asked if similar programming could be offered after school for students from Phillips Avenue, which serves grades K-4. After meeting with Ms. Kutner and Debra Rogers, the School's Principal, CMEE discovered that the only afterschool offering provided by the school was one hour of weekly "homework help" for 3rd and 4th graders. The need for educational enrichment at the school is acute. Besides being a Title I school based on the high number of low-income families, Phillips Avenue was designated a "Focus School" for scoring in the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide.

Although the Children's Museum attracts over 77,000 people each year to its Bridgehampton location, CMEE's strategic planning process revealed that it wasn't reaching two thirds of children living in the region. Distance from Bridgehampton was the chief barrier, which Museum membership numbers help illustrate. Sag Harbor, located 4 miles north of CMEE with a population of 6,622 is home to 157 Museum members. In contrast, Riverhead, which is just north of Riverside, has a population of 33,781, but only 21 families are CMEE members. Similarly, the Museum has difficulty encouraging field trips from more populous schools located farther west in Suffolk County. According to surveys of teachers, travel time to Bridgehampton is the largest impediment. For schools like William

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Floyd Elementary in Shirley, traveling to Riverside would mean a trip of just 20 minutes rather than almost an hour to reach Bridgehampton.

During conversations with local educators and social service providers, Museum staff learned that even though CMEE provides access to anyone who can’t afford to attend its exhibits or programming – for example, over 700 people used an EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card to visit the Museum for free in 2018 – many marginalized families still hesitated to participate. Just as in Riverside, this lack of participation is attributable to a variety of factors, including transportation challenges, long work days, language barriers, and a general unease with navigating area institutions. If two thirds of children in the East End do not attend the Museum’s location in Bridgehampton, CMEE’s Strategic Plan spurs staff to make every effort to bring CMEE’s resources to them directly.

With the help of Siris Barrios and Riverside Rediscovered, the Children’s Museum surveyed families and other community members in Riverside to determine what kind of educational services they wanted to see presented at the new space in Ludlam Avenue Park. They identified six types of offerings:

- An indoor playground where toddlers and young children could challenge themselves and work on their gross motor development.
- Early childhood classes and services during the morning for families with babies and toddlers.
- School field trips and Afterschool programs that enhance the school curriculum.
- Summer camp for children in the community, especially because there are no other affordable options.
- Evening programs that families could attend after work, similar to the classes CMEE offers at the Riverside Rediscovered office.
- On weekends, community events and workshops for families. During nice weather, these events would take place outside in the Park.

As a result of **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**, CMEE will achieve three performance measurements outlined by the IMLS:

1. The Children’s Museum is better able to engage its community.
2. The Children’s Museum offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs.
3. The Children’s Museum is an active contributor to problem solving in the Riverside community.

Project Work Plan

The Town of Southampton’s Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of the new 4,000 square-foot facility that will house **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**. With Riverside Rediscovered and FRNCA’s help, the Town solicited input on the size and scope of the facility from area residents and developed a concept plan. For example, residents wanted the architecture of the building to reflect other buildings in the area. DCAK*MSA won the bid to design the project and they submitted final drawings and specifications in November 2018. The Town is currently developing a bid package, which will be distributed in January 2019 to solicit bids from construction companies that can complete the project using a modular process. Bidding is expected to close by February 21 and after reviewing the bids, the Town Board will award the winner by March 29, 2019. Kristen Doulos, the Parks & Recreation Director will have oversight over the construction and anticipates its completion by November 2019. While the Parks Department will oversee the maintenance and upkeep, Sarah Altgracia will serve as CMEE’s full-time Site Manager for the facility, including providing program assistance. Once construction is completed, she will oversee the procurement and installation of materials into the building, including the indoor play set and soft play equipment, as well as tables, chairs, rugs, shelving, art drying racks, and arts supplies. CMEE plans to officially open in Ludlam Avenue Park in February 2020.

Planning **The Children’s Museum@Riverside** will begin in October 2019 and be led by Stephen Long, CMEE’s President. To ensure clear communication between Town officials, community members and Museum staff, he will convene a series of meetings with Ms. Altagracia and –

- Liz Bard, Education Director for the Children’s Museum,
- Leah Oppenheimer, Community Outreach Director for the Children’s Museum,
- Tiffany Stewart, Marketing Director for the Children’s Museum,
- Kristen Doulos, Director of Southampton Town Parks & Recreation,
- Debra Rogers, Principal of Phillips Avenue School,
- Siris Barrios, Community Liaison from Riverside Rediscovered, and
- Ron Fisher, President of the Flanders, Riverside, Northampton Community Association (FRNCA).

From October 2019 through January 2020, Mr. Long and Ms. Bard will establish a comprehensive year-long calendar of programs and events for **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**. (A preliminary Program Calendar for February–May 2020 is attached.) Since this is the same time period that CMEE uses to plan its annual programming calendar for Bridgehampton, there is a potential for staff getting overextended. To limit the amount of time required to plan programs and train educators, Ms. Bard intends to offer many of the same programs in Riverside that have a previous track record of success, which is a strategy recommended by other children’s museums that have opened satellite sites. In addition to offering similar programs, CMEE staff will recreate its Active Play Space in the 1,000 square foot exhibit gallery in Riverside. Sarah Altagracia will plan the installation of the commercial play set and soft play equipment designed for children ages 2 to 5. The 300 square foot exhibit space will be used as a community gallery. For example, the space can display work created during the art classes in Riverside. During this same period, Evaluation Consultant, Elisabeth Nevins will finalize the evaluation plan for the project.

Beginning in November 2019, Ms. Bard will develop curriculum and lesson plans for the Afterschool Program in collaboration with Debra Rogers, as well as Christine Tona, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and teachers at the Phillips Avenue School. She will also hire and prepare five part-time educators needed for program delivery.

To maintain strong, active community engagement, Siris Barrios will work with Leah Oppenheimer throughout the fall of 2019 and winter of 2020 to foster ongoing communication with parents, teachers and other community stakeholders. To ensure robust program participation, Ms. Barrios will share Riverside Rediscovered’s database of community members as well as accompany Ms. Oppenheimer while door-knocking in the surrounding area. Their effort to bring in families living outside of Riverside will be augmented by CMEE’s Marketing Director, Tiffany Stewart.

Starting in December 2019, Ms. Stewart will use the same strategies for publicizing CMEE’s Bridgehampton location, including working with local social service organizations to alert their constituencies about the offerings. Since over half of local families learn about children’s activities through digital media, Ms. Stewart will use Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, the Museum’s website and eblasts to make the general public aware of **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**.

To reach potential audiences who don’t currently receive the Museum’s promotional information, Ms. Stewart will send press releases and publicity listings to local newspapers, cable TV and radio stations, and family-oriented magazines. She will work with Pia Leighton, the Museum’s translation consultant to ensure that all marketing materials are translated into Spanish and distributed throughout the community. Since visits to CMEE in Bridgehampton by families living north and west of Riverside are tiny relative to their overall populations, the Museum’s leadership is very confident that **The Children’s Museum@Riverside** will attract new visitors in numbers that can sustain the additional facility without cannibalizing the Museum’s current audience.

CMEE staff solicited input from focus groups in Riverside to develop a pricing structure for the new location. They recommended charging \$5 per person for “drop-in visits” to the exhibit gallery. For programming, families would pay \$10 per class meeting for the first child and \$3 for each additional child. Parents and caregivers would be admitted for free. This pricing model for programs is similar to the Brooklyn Children's Museum's satellite location where additional children are charged 28% of the cost of the initial child and caregivers do not pay to enter. School field trips will be \$7 per student (as they are at the Museum's Bridgehampton site) and the Afterschool Program will be completely subsidized. Ms. Stewart will advertise the fee structure as part of her marketing efforts. Low income families who can't afford the fee will be able to show their EBT cards to receive free access to the programming, just as they currently do in Bridgehampton. The Suffolk County Department of Social Services and other organizations serving low income families have agreed to promote the Museum's offerings to their clients and to help the Museum leverage grant funding for increased educational opportunities for underserved children.

CMEE conservatively estimates generating \$84,200 in earned revenue during the first year of operation. Mr. Long and the Board of Trustees have begun securing additional funding from local businesses and foundations. To date, BNB Bank, Peconic Bay Medical Center, the Schaffer Foundation and the Southampton Charitable Fund have committed \$78,000 to support the first year of operations.

Ms. Barrios will schedule quarterly meetings for community members to provide ongoing feedback on **The Children's Museum@Riverside**. In addition to these focus groups, Elisabeth Nevins will oversee the evaluation and develop a variety of assessment tools to measure the project's performance, including –

- Visitation statistics to measure attendance from residents of Riverside and zip codes outside the hamlet
- Registration data to measure program capacity and afterschool participation
- Coordination with Phillips Avenue School to track test scores, misconduct reports and teacher perception
- Surveys (paper and web-based) to measure new connections among families, increased work hours, satisfaction with the Museum's offerings, pricing, and presence in the community.

During the fall of 2019, Ms. Nevins will establish a baseline for the performance measurements and use the assessment tools to collect data throughout the first year of the project. In July 2020, she will present an interim six-month report, which will be used to modify and update the programming for the following school year. Her final report will be completed in January 2021. (Ms. Nevin's evaluation plan is in the proposal's appendices.)

Starting in February 2020, the Museum will present a full calendar of programming in Riverside:

Early Childhood Programs

During weekdays, CMEE plans to serve children ages 0 to 4 along with their caregivers, with an array of early childhood classes featuring art, cooking, music and yoga. In addition, the Museum plans to offer “Tot Spot,” a drop-in play group, *Cantemos*, the Museum's Family Literacy Program for Spanish-speaking families, and “Baby & Me,” a play and support group for parents with infant children. CMEE anticipates hiring one educator who is a New York State certified teacher to present the early childhood programs and school field trips.

School Field Trips

On Tuesdays between 10am and 1pm and Thursdays and Fridays between 11am and 12:30pm, teachers will be able to register for a field trip. CMEE plans to offer two of its most popular field trips in Riverside:

- Farming in the East End: Using the garden area behind the new building, children will have hands-on opportunities to learn about the science of agriculture and its long history in the region.
- The Art of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner: In cooperation with the Pollock-Krasner House in East Hampton, CMEE will provide students with the chance to learn about the lives and artwork of Lee Krasner

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and Jackson Pollock. CMEE offers this field trip because the Pollock-Krasner’s seasonal availability and distance prevents many schools from visiting the House directly.

Afterschool Programs

CMEE will hire four educators to present Afterschool Programs at **The Children’s Museum@Riverside** for children enrolled in Phillips Avenue School from 3:30pm to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. The activities would engage children in learning through play featuring multidisciplinary content in STEM, arts and the humanities along with homework help and literacy and language development.

Summer Camp

CMEE anticipates retaining the same four educators who are conducting the afterschool programming to offer a ten-week summer camp from 9am to 3pm, Monday through Friday for children in the community. Running in place of the Afterschool Program, the curriculum will incorporate many of the same activities featured in the Museum’s summer program in Bridgehampton, such as chess, puppetry, dance, gardening, and robotics.

Evening Classes for Families

CMEE will expand its offerings of family art and science classes in the evenings from three to five days per week, arranging for one of the afterschool educators teach the programs. In addition, CMEE will partner with other social service agencies to offer evening programs. For example, the Retreat, which assists families affected by domestic violence, will provide clients with job skills training while the Museum presents programming for their children. Katy’s Courage, which presents a bereavement program called “Katy’s Kids” for children in Bridgehampton, has been asked by families living in the Western part of Suffolk County to offer the same program in Riverside.

Community Events and Workshops on Weekends

The idea of hosting weekend community events on the grounds of the Park was especially exciting to Riverside residents. They were eager to see the Museum feature events it had successfully presented in Bridgehampton, such as “Rocket Day” and the “Feria,” as well as events created by local residents such as “Juneteenth,” a festival commemorating the end of slavery. In addition, the Museum will present weekend workshops featuring art, dance, gardening and other disciplines. The community events and workshops will be managed by three staff members.

Indoor Playground

One of the most popular exhibit areas at CMEE’s location in Bridgehampton is the indoor playground, which offers an age-appropriate area for young children to develop new skills, socialize, imagine and challenge themselves. Families in Riverside expressed eagerness to have a similarly safe space in their community that would enable children to be physically active especially during cold or rainy days. During the first year of operation, CMEE will fundraise for traveling exhibits that can rotate with the Indoor Playground in the site’s main exhibit gallery.

Project Results

Research by the University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) will inform the performance measurements for **The Children’s Museum@Riverside**. The SIAP found that low-income communities with vibrant cultural assets enjoyed lower obesity rates, lower crime rates and a higher percentage of students scoring in the top stratum on English and Math exams compared to other low-income areas with limited cultural assets.

Working with Evaluation Consultant, Elisabeth Nevins, CMEE has developed several project outcomes that will measure the Museum’s performance as a strong partner helping to address important needs in the community:

1. The Children’s Museum will be better able to engage its community -
 - a. By increasing the number of children and families who participate in its programs and activities.
 - During the project period, CMEE anticipates hosting 15,000 visitors in Riverside, which would be a 19% increase in CMEE’s overall attendance. (12,000 program participants/3,000 exhibit gallery visits)

- b. By having families of different backgrounds realize how much their families share in common.
 - CMEE will determine how effectively its early childhood programs are fostering friendships by distributing anonymous surveys. Museum staff members anticipate that 60% of participating parents or caregivers will schedule a playdate with another class member outside of the class.
 - To help facilitate interaction among families, CMEE will provide discounted birthday parties at the Museum, free tickets to special events, and an opt-in contact sheet for all participants. CMEE staff will conduct an anonymous online survey to gauge the extent of interaction among families. By the conclusion of the project, 30% of the families will have socialized with another family they did not know prior to attending **The Children's Museum@Riverside**.
 - c. By generating sufficient income so that **The Children's Museum@Riverside** can sustain its presence within the hamlet.
 - Interviews, focus groups and surveys conducted by Ms. Nevins will help refine the pricing structure to help meet the needs of the Museum and community.
2. The Children's Museum offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs -
 - a. By offering programs that support their children's education, which families can't access elsewhere.
 - Attendance for early childhood, family, and weekend programs will reach at least 90% capacity.
 - b. By offering programming after school, the Museum can increase the amount of time that parents are able to work during the week - without worrying about childcare - by 10%.
 - At least 20% of the 520 students at Phillips Avenue School will attend at least two days of afterschool programming per week. If the demand is significantly higher, Ms. Rogers has agreed to use space in the school for part of the program.
 - c. By helping Phillips Avenue become a school in "Good Standing" and no longer a "Focus School."
 - By 2021, test scores in English Language Arts and Math assessments among Afterschool Program participants will improve by 15%.
 - Teachers will report improved social behaviors and reduced incidents of aggressive behavior.
 - Reports of student misconduct will decrease by 33%.
3. CMEE will be an active contributor to problem solving in the Riverside community -
 - a. By helping residents feel prouder of and safer in their hamlet.
 - During focus groups and "door-knocking" efforts, 75% of respondents will express strong satisfaction with **The Children's Museum@Riverside** and its impact on the community.
 - Serious crime around the Ludlam Avenue Park area will decrease 10% in the 1 ½ years after the **The Children's Museum@Riverside** opens.
 - b. By providing an environment and activities that improve economic conditions in Riverside.
 - Using visitor surveys, CMEE staff will identify over 7,000 caregivers and children who came from outside of Riverside to attend **The Children's Museum@Riverside**.
 - During surveys, 75% of families visiting Riverside will report that they would eat in a local restaurant if a family-friendly option was available. This data will help support efforts to attract restauranteurs to the area. The *Riverside Revitalization Action Plan* determined that over \$2 million was currently draining out of the local economy because residents needed to go elsewhere for restaurants.

In addition to transforming the hamlet of Riverside, the fulfillment of these goals will help CMEE achieve its strategic vision to become "a thriving community resource where all children ages 0 to 9 are immersed in play and discovery, develop practical and social skills for a diverse world, and have the time of their lives all while strengthening bonds within families and across the community of Eastern Long Island."

