



2012

**National Medal for Museum  
and Library Service**





**INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES**

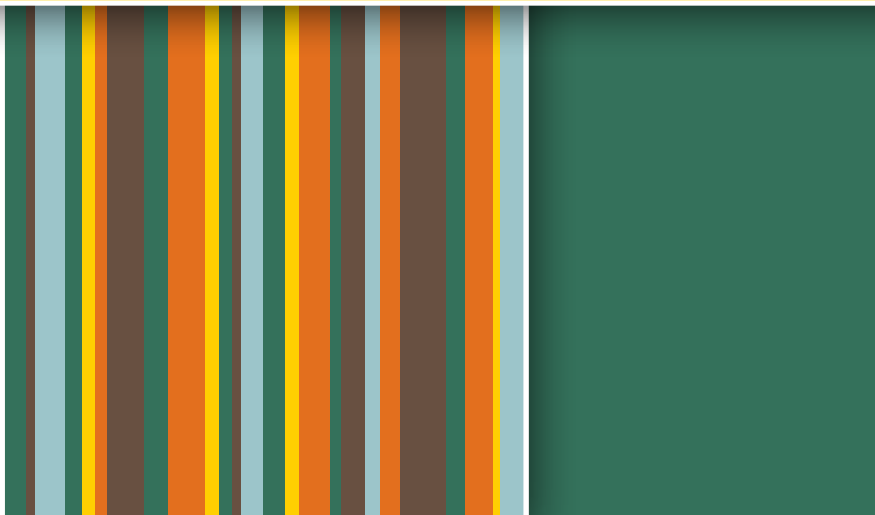
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**CREDITS**

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“Congratulations to the winners of the National Medal for Museum and Library Services. This year’s recipients share a common commitment to excellence, spirit of innovative thinking, and determination to serve their home communities. By pushing the boundaries of what’s possible and embracing new ideas and approaches, these award winners have challenged the conventional notions of what a library or museum can and should be. Congratulations again. I wish you all the best.”

—First Lady Michelle Obama



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## From the IMLS Director

I am pleased to present the recipients of the 2012 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Medal is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums. It celebrates libraries and museums that make a difference for individuals, families, and communities.

Medal winners are selected from a nationwide nominations process. Successful institutions demonstrate innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. This year five libraries and five museums have been selected to receive the award.

The ten institutions honored this year serve communities in both large cities and small towns, with users of all ages. The winners are representative of the great diversity of U.S. libraries and museums and include art, children's, and science museums, a botanical garden, a school library, and several public libraries. They all share the common bond of having achieved extraordinary success at reaching out to the communities they serve in effective and inventive ways.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, together with the National Museum and Library Services Board, is proud to congratulate the winners of the 2012 National Medals for Museum and Library Service.

Sincerely,  
Susan H. Hildreth, Director  
Institute of Museum and Library Services

IMLS would like to thank the following for their generous support of the National Medals celebration:



The Institute is proud to partner with  
**StoryCorps**  
to document stories that demonstrate  
the ongoing impact of these award-  
winning institutions.



# Bootheel Youth Museum

Malden, MO

## Big-City Museum in a Small Town

Visitors to Malden, Missouri, population 4,277, might not expect to discover a vibrant children's museum worthy of a big city, but that's exactly what they'll find in the Bootheel Youth Museum, which aims to inspire "insatiable curiosity" in all of its visitors.

Bootheel was founded through the efforts of three local women who thought rural, economically disadvantaged children should have the same enrichment opportunities as their urban peers. The community rallied behind the idea, even voting for a sales tax to help fund the museum, and it's the community that has helped expand the museum from fifty exhibits in 1996 to 250 today. Although the museum has only three full-time and four part-time staff members, plus volunteers, it entertains and educates 30,000 visitors each year, many of whom come from out of state.

"Our primary focus is on science and mathematics," says Patsy Reublin, the Bootheel Youth Museum's executive director. "But because of our rural community, we wanted to offer more."

## Innovative Programs: From Grocery Stores to Outer Space

In this case, "more" means traditional children's museum exhibits combined with sound

science and a thirst for adventure. After kids visit the grocery store and milk a cow in the *BYM Children's Village*, their visit can take a turn toward the otherworldly. In *This Island Mars: A Space Adventure*, children learn how astronauts sleep, explore an interactive space station, and use a camera and green-screen technology to see themselves in a weightless environment. If the last frontier isn't exciting enough, there's always the old one. While *Making Tracks on the Lewis and Clark Trail*, kids can row a keel boat, go caving, and climb the Rocky Mountains—all while learning about 17th-century medicine and the first time American Indians and African Americans could vote. The museum also hosts an outdoor classroom with a half-acre pond, which boasts such wildlife as wood ducks and a snapping turtle.

But what really sets Bootheel Youth Museum apart is what Reublin calls "community excitement"—the museum and the community work together to enrich and support each other. The Bootheel Youth Museum, along with its community partners and a team of Americorps volunteers, offers low- or no-cost science demonstrations to local schools as well as traveling exhibits that visit ten to twelve community fairs each year. Students can learn about subjects ranging from nanotechnology to seismology through hands-on activities and

plays. "They're excited and giggling," Reublin says, "and when you ask them at the end, they remember the science."

Moving forward, the museum plans to introduce green technology and place even more emphasis on math and science engagement, while still focusing on what makes the Bootheel experience so special in the first place. "We get a lot of comments like, 'How can such a small place have something so fantastic?'" says Reublin. "You need a community and a fantastic mission, and all of these things came together in Malden. It's possible because of our community."

**"How can such a small place have something so fantastic?' It's because of our community."**

**—Patsy Reublin, Executive Director**



### Community Partners

The City of Malden, Southeast Missouri State University-Malden, AmeriCorps, Missouri Community Service Commission, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, NISE.net, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, St. Louis Science Center, Malden Elementary School, BPS Telephone, BPS Networks, Creative Design Group, Malden RSVP, Malden Chambermaids, Missouri State Emergency Management Agency: Earthquake Preparedness, Malden Emergency Management Agency, Malden Board of Public Works, Mid-America Arts Alliance HELP Advance, and many other community service providers.

### Address

Bootheel Youth Museum  
700 North Douglass Street  
Malden, MO 63863

**Website:** [www.bootheelyouthmuseum.org](http://www.bootheelyouthmuseum.org)

**Phone:** 573-276-3600

**Annual Budget:** \$301,542.94

**Full-time Staff:** 3

**Part-time Staff:** 4

**Executive Director:** Patsy Reublin

Left: An astronaut visits the kids' store. Center: Children participate in Shocking Science, a static electricity workshop presented by AmeriCorps Members. Right: A visitor explores the REO Speedwagon Fire Truck. Photos by Denton Kooyman.

**250** number of museum exhibits in 2012 (up from 50 in 1996)

**4,277** Malden population in 2011

**30,000** annual museum visitors

# Contra Costa County Library

Pleasant Hill, CA

## Library Services on the Go

In today's age of mobile platforms and social media, libraries are looking to extend beyond their buildings, and Contra Costa County Library is at the forefront of using new technologies to bring itself to its customers. "Technology is a means to an end," says County Librarian Barbara L. Flynn. "And the end here is reaching our community and customers."

Contra Costa County is situated across the bay from San Francisco, and many of its 1,066,696 residents endure long work commutes. A 2001 study by the U.S. Census Bureau confirmed that, at an average of 34.4 minutes, Contra Costa commuters have the longest slog on the West Coast. To meet the needs of the commuting population, Contra Costa created *Snap & Go*, a mobile application for smart phones. When library cardholders with the app want to read an e-book, they simply snap a picture of a Quick Response (QR) code using a smart phone. Within minutes, they're able to download an e-book and begin listening. The library teamed up with the local transportation system, placing bus ads with QR codes that commuters could photograph as they traveled. "We could meet people where they are," says Flynn.

## Innovative Programs: Cultural Access and E-Books

A new program, *Discover & Go*, helps library customers find free or low-cost entrance passes to local cultural institutions such as museums and galleries. Many libraries offer discount museum passes in paper or laminate form, but patrons must physically go to the library to acquire them. If the pass is not returned then no one else can take advantage of the discount. With *Discover & Go*, customers can order, download, and print passes from their home, work or library computers. The program allows cultural institutions to reach underserved populations while library customers can explore more of the Bay Area. In August 2012, the library system teamed up with Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to offer a thousand \$10 metro passes for those ordering museum tickets through the *Discover & Go* program. This partnership enabled lower-income residents to visit cultural destinations without worrying about transportation costs.

New this year, the library is partnering with the Califa Library Group, the largest library network in California, to create an open source e-book platform. Other initiatives include bringing e-book readers to homebound seniors, who often find turning pages and

enlarging type easier on such devices, and holding workshops and fairs to teach library goers about available technologies.

That's not to say that the library doesn't embrace the basics. For example, *Project Second Chance* trains tutors for adults who want to develop reading skills—sometimes to gain better employment, sometimes to read to their children or grandchildren. "We don't limit ourselves to just technology. We excel at being at the forefront of a lot of technologies and services," says Flynn. "Technology is just one way to provide what customers are asking for, what they are looking to libraries to provide."

**"The end game for us is to extend our reach into the community and customers."**

**—Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian**





### Community Partners

Friends, Foundations, 511 Contra Costa, Bay Area Library and Information System, Bay Area Rapid Transit, California State Library, Contra Costa Times, Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, Diablo Valley College, First 5 Contra Costa, Contra Costa County Probation Department, Project Second Chance, Inc., Target, TriDelta Transit, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, Bay Area museums and cultural institutions, the cities and towns in Contra Costa, and many more.

### Address

Contra Costa County Library  
1750 Oak Park Boulevard  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

**Website:** <http://ccclib.org>

**Phone:** 925-646-6423

**Annual Budget:** \$24,233,905

**Full-time Staff:** 115

**Part-time Staff:** 188

**Director:** Barbara L. Flynn

Left: Library customer learning about *Discover & Go* with his phone. Center: California Shakespeare Theater, a *Discover & Go* partner, presents "The Verona Project." Right: Lindsay Wildlife Museum at Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

**1,000** \$10 metro passes for museum-goers

**30-35 minutes** the average length of a Contra Costa County worker's commute

# Cumberland County Public Library

Fayetteville, NC

## Serving a Unique Community

In filling the needs of its community, Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center has become a shining reflection of the culture, times, and unique populace of Cumberland County, North Carolina. With such a diverse audience, the library wants “to have a gamut of resources and programming available,” explains Director Jody Risacher.

Cumberland County is home to Fort Bragg, a large military installation, so it’s not unusual to see men and women in uniform browsing the stacks or using the computers. The military shapes every facet of the community, but none greater than the multicultural flavor it contributes as service members return sharing their experiences from around the world. Librarians are uniquely positioned to connect with soldiers and their families by providing much needed resources and help during times of transition caused by deployments, transfers to new duty stations, or retirement.

## Innovative Programs: Military Histories and Job Retraining

When librarians learned of a new documentary detailing the lives of the Pea Island Lifesavers—a group of African Americans who rescued sailors from shipwrecks in the Outer Banks—

they arranged a screening to share this little-known tale.

When the mayor started *Heroes Homecoming*, a project focusing on Vietnam veterans, the library agreed to house and make available to the public, the taped interviews created as part of the project. “With older generations, you need to capture the stories with every opportunity,” says Risacher.

The library not only functions as a repository of local history, but it also works to address present-day needs. When unemployment rose, the library rallied to get people back to work, offering not only free resume help and classes for essential job related computer skills, but also one-on-one help for adults who learn better in more personalized settings. “We’ve become known in the area of helping people get back to work. We make contacts in the business community and partner with job training organizations,” says Risacher. That includes hosting employment fairs attended by hundreds of job seekers, many of whom found success. The library combined the job fair with health assessments and information on health care services because the unemployed and underemployed may lack the resources to focus on their health.

Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center is vital to every facet of

the community. *Librari-con*, a large anime and manga festival that encourages costume-wearing, reaches teens from around the state and provides an outlet for imaginative expression. *Sensory Story Time* meets the needs of children with Down syndrome, autism, and other disabilities. The annual *Storytelling Festival* celebrates the vibrant narrative tradition. A speaker series, *Parents & Teens: Let’s Talk About It*, helps families discuss sensitive topics and combat youth bullying. Imagination and learning converge in programs for youth that foster creativity and problem solving related to science, technology, engineering and math.

As Director Jody Risacher tells it, the library is a connective thread, weaving different groups into the tapestry of the Fayetteville community.

“The community is a **complex tapestry**, and the library is a **connective thread** that strengthens it.”

—Jody Risacher, Director



### Community Partners

Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County, Center for Economic Empowerment & Development, Cultural Arts Network, Cumberland County Schools, Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc., Fascinate-U Children's Museum, Fayetteville – Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Friends of the Cumberland County Public Library, Heroes Homecoming, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Methodist University, Museum of the Cape Fear, Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Strategic Alliance of Business Resources for Entrepreneurs, Sustainable Sandhills.

### Address

Cumberland County Public Library  
300 Maiden Lane  
Fayetteville, NC 28301

**Website:** [www.cumberland.lib.nc.us](http://www.cumberland.lib.nc.us)

**Phone:** 910-483-7727

**Annual Budget:** \$9.5 million

**Full-time Staff:** 159

**Part-time Staff:** 65

**Director:** Jody Risacher

Left: The library's job fairs attract hundreds and have proven successful for those seeking employment. Center: A budding engineer shows off his creativity at a STEM program. Right: The library offers opportunities to meet and learn one-on-one with information specialists.

**Honoring Vietnam Veterans** Vietnam veteran interview program  
**Librari-con** Anime and manga convention  
**Parents & Teens: Let's Talk About It** Family program series

# Garfield Park Conservatory

Chicago, IL

## Revitalizing a Conservatory and a Neighborhood

By 1994, the Garfield Park Conservatory (GPC), an important building with a history that goes back to the early nineteenth century, was already suffering from neglect. But a cold snap that year put the GPC in immediate jeopardy. The public responded, seeing not just an opportunity to preserve a landmark and cultural institution but also a chance to revitalize Chicago's West Side. The task force that was created to address the crisis eventually grew into the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance (GPCA).

In a neighborhood that had been in decline, the conservatory has become something in which locals can take real pride. After artist Dale Chihuly did a glass installation at the GPC in 2001, the conservatory went from seeing 10,000 visitors a year to welcoming 600,000 within eighteen months, an increase that brought international attention and spurred economic development in the area. One GPCA program, the *Garfield Park Community Garden Network*, works with residents to repurpose vacant lots and neighborhood eyesores into vibrant community gardens. So far, the network has created eighteen community gardens covering two acres of urban landscape. Community residents can learn

everything they need to know about gardening in Chicago through conservatory workshops—which range from beekeeping to soil conservation—and then use that knowledge to grow food and flowers at home. Residents benefit from the exercise, fresh food, and beautification, and the neighborhood improves when people feel that they have staked a personal claim. “Once the community makes an investment, once they have sweat equity, they take pride,” says GPCA President Eunita Rushing, who adds that when people develop a sense of ownership, they also become more likely to report crime and protect public spaces.

## Innovative Youth Programs

GPC aims to provide a safe place where people come together to learn, grow, and develop a relationship with plants and the natural world. Many parents don't feel safe allowing their children to play outdoors, but the conservatory's gardens and yard give kids opportunities for free play and exploration along with education. In GPC's early education program, *Morning Glories*, children visit self-guided stations with activities ranging from planting to crafts. The *Growing Resources and Opportunities for West Side Schools* (GROWS) pilot program, for children in elementary school, works

with teachers to integrate the conservatory's resources into science curricula. The students feel so strongly about the conservatory that when a summer hailstorm caused major damage in 2011, they raised \$600 to repair the greenhouses. Green Teens focuses on giving high school students environmental and arts-based training that will help them in college and in the workforce. The program has enrolled 400 teenagers since 2006; now 48 percent of them either attend college or hold jobs. “If we help kids get a sense of pride and ownership [in GPC], they'll want to expose their own children; they'll want to sustain the community, sustain the conservatory, sustain the planet,” says Rushing.

“They'll want to sustain the **community**, sustain the **conservatory**, sustain the **planet**.”

—Eunita Rushing, GPCA President



### Community Partners

After School Matters, Al Raby High School, Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Chicago Park District, Chicago West Community Music Center, East Garfield Park Community Coalition, Fulton Street Fruit and Vegetable Garden, Garfield Park Community Council, Green Teacher Network, Growing Power, Inspiration Corporation, NeighborSpace, Openlands, Polaris Charter Academy, SAFER Foundation, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, Westside Cultural Arts Council, and many other community service providers.

### Address

Garfield Park Conservatory  
300 North Central Park Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60624

**Website:** [www.garfieldconservatory.org](http://www.garfieldconservatory.org)

**Phone:** 773-638-1766

**Annual Budget:** \$2,060,328

**Full-time Staff:** 15

**Part-time Staff:** 3

**Director:** Eunita Rushing

Left: Schoolchildren learn about worm composting.  
Center: Cultural celebrations at the Conservatory.  
Right: Volunteers helping to build raised beds.

**30,000** average number of visitors per month, up from 10,000 per year

**18** community gardens created

**\$600** raised by children to repair hail-damaged greenhouses

# Long Island Children’s Museum

Garden City, NY

## Learning from the Past, Teaching for the Future

For the past decade, the Long Island Children’s Museum (LICM) has delighted more than 250,000 annual visitors with 30,000 square feet of hands-on exhibits. But the museum is far more than a family outing for residents of Nassau and other surrounding counties. “We have a very strong commitment to being the heart of the community,” says LICM President Suzanne LeBlanc. “We put our emphasis on long-term relationships.”

Sometimes, that means exploring the unique culture of Long Island itself. In *Saltwater Stories*, the entire first floor of the museum transforms into a showcase for Long Island’s maritime traditions. Baymen, folk artists, and other tradition bearers share stories and crafts, while a relocated smokehouse gives families the taste—and scent—of Long Island’s economic and cultural heritage.

LICM adapts and develops programming to fit the needs of its community. The museum works closely with educators, family caseworkers, focus and advisory groups, and other community members to discover and respond to unmet needs, including those of economically and culturally isolated communities.

This feedback has led to the creation of programs like the *Westbury Science Literacy*

*Partnership*, which trains elementary school teachers in high-need schools to use inquiry-based learning methods to engage students and makes the museum available as an extension of the classroom.

## Innovative Programs: Supporting Parents

Another program, *Together to Kindergarten*, aims to address the lack of kindergarten-readiness programs serving Haitian and Latino immigrant families. The children take English-immersion preschool classes, but the program is unique in also addressing the needs of parents, who learn about U.S. school culture and the resources that will help them advocate for their children. The museum hosts reunion nights for three years after the families graduate, helping to cultivate community bonding and lifelong relationships with LICM.

The program *Be Together, Learn Together* was created to support child advocacy organizations that serve Long Island. LICM hosts parenting workshops for parents who have lost custody of their children or are at risk of doing so, helping to fill a crucial gap in social services. When caseworkers noted that the supervised visitation rooms at the Nassau County Health and Human Services Welcome Center looked too industrial, LICM exhibit programmers added new paint, puppet

theaters, and table activities to facilitate a more natural interaction between children and family members.

Moving forward, the museum hopes to add new permanent exhibits, increase its science outreach, and expand its outdoor offerings. Its current outdoor exhibit, *Our Backyard*, offers 4,000 square feet of garden area, where children can pick ingredients for salads and teenagers learn to teach “green” lessons to younger kids. Mostly, though, the museum will listen to its community, cementing its place as a vitally important part of Long Island.

“The idea is that the museum is a gathering place,” says LeBlanc. “We try to be very responsive. The best things grow from the ground up.”

**“We try to be very responsive. The best things grow from the ground up.”**

**—Suzanne LeBlanc, President**



### Community Partners

Aspiring Young Artists; Early Years Institute; Eben-Ezer Haitian Baptist Church, Westbury; Girl Scouts of Nassau County; Hempstead Head Start; Hofstra and Adelphi Universities; Long Island Nature Collaborative for Kids; Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums; Nassau County Family Court and Department of Social Services; Nassau and Suffolk County Library Systems; North Shore LIJ/Cohen Children's Medical Center; Pratt Institute; Spanish All Year; Westbury, Uniondale, Hempstead School Districts; and many other community service providers.

### Address

Long Island Children's Museum  
11 Davis Avenue  
Garden City, NY 11530  
**Website:** <http://licm.org>  
**Phone:** 514-224-5800  
**Annual Budget:** \$4,324,000  
**Full-time Staff:** 30  
**Part-time Staff:** 65  
**President:** Suzanne LeBlanc

Left: Haitian children learn their numbers in the *Ansam, Ansam pou Kindègaten* classroom. Center: Parents and children both participate in *Together to Kindergarten* programs. Right: A young participant in the museum's *Delighting in de Kooning* al fresco workshop.

**250,000** approximate number of visitors a year

**3,700** square feet of garden

**40,000** square feet of exhibits

# Museum of Contemporary Art

North Miami, FL

## Reaching Across Barriers with Art

The Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami (MOCA) isn't just a cultural institution or gallery space but a vital, breathing place where people come together—not just to connect disparate parts of the community but to become one. For its students, artists, members, and alumni, “It’s like a living presence that they love,” says MOCA Executive Director and Chief Curator Bonnie Clearwater.

With a large immigrant population, the Miami-Dade area is one of America’s most diverse. This environment boasts creative and cultural influences—but also a number of people who feel like strangers in a strange land. MOCA’s educational branch, its Art Institute, has reached out to these individuals with programming that eases feelings of isolation through the universal language of art. Many children enter MOCA’s free art programs knowing little English, but art enables them to excel and communicate regardless of their language proficiency. The classes also help to connect new immigrants and U.S. natives. When instructors discovered that many immigrant students were interested in fashion—and had sewing skills taught to them by their grandmothers—they paired them with art students who lacked practical sewing knowledge. Students learn “how to network, how to make

friends, how to get involved, how to become part of a community,” says Clearwater.

## Innovative Programs: Engaging Girls

The museum’s educational programming aims to keep students in school, deter gang involvement, and empower women. In 2003, MOCA noticed that teen delinquency was on the rise among girls, but most services targeted boys. The museum started an innovative new program, *Women on the Rise!*, which serves teen girls and trains local women artists to go into such facilities as juvenile detention centers to help female detainees work together, have fun, and find constructive ways of expressing themselves. Contemporary art, after all, deals with many of the issues these girls face in everyday life. Other initiatives work with teachers to integrate art into other subjects, because when students are excited about a project, they come to school. Community art projects, like painting murals with visiting artists, encourage children to take pride in their community.

MOCA aims to build a creative future for North Miami and its students. People who can fill creative jobs are in large demand; film is a growing industry in the city, as is event production, graphic design, urban design, architectural preservation, and an array of careers in communication. MOCA guides its

students into magnet programs, art schools, and internships. Alumni return to the museum as role models, telling new students how they themselves were able to get into college and build careers with the skills and opportunities gained at MOCA. The museum has proven itself vital not only in creating a thriving, creative community but also in building a job base that will allow North Miami to prosper in the coming decades. As Clearwater says, “This is the place where people all over the community—and the world—come to break barriers, become friends, and build community.” As the students put it, “MOCA is home.”

“It’s like a living presence  
that they love.”

—Bonnie Clearwater  
Executive Director and Chief Curator





### Community Partners

The Alliance for GLBTQ Youth, AMI/Kids Wings, Breakthrough Miami, Casa Valentina, GEMS Camp at Miami-Dade Women's Park, Honey Shine Mentoring Program, Jewish Community Services of South Florida, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami-Dade Regional Juvenile Detention Center, New Horizons, Pridelines Youth Services, Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, Urgent, Inc., Vitas/Children's Bereavement Center, The Village, Girl Power.

### Address

Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami  
770 NE 125th Street  
North Miami, FL 33161

**Website:** [www.mocanomi.org](http://www.mocanomi.org)

**Phone:** 305-893-6211

**Annual Budget:** \$4.8 million

**Full-time Staff:** 12

**Part-time Staff:** 14

**Director:** Bonnie Clearwater

Left: Artist Enoc Perez works with teens. Center:  
A family views the Rita Ackermann exhibition.  
Right: A school tour of the museum.

**Museum Studies | Architectural Preservation  
Event Production | Fashion Design**

—Fields introduced to area students by MOCA

# Naturita Community Library

Naturita, CO

## Bright Spot in a Harsh Landscape

While the rest of the country talks recession, the 526 citizens of Naturita, Colorado, see more of the status quo. A mining community built in considerable isolation—the 9,000-foot-high Uncompahgre Plateau stands between Naturita and the county seat—the town has experienced economic booms from uranium and oil, but good fortune has yet to last. Driving around town, one sees more boarded-up businesses than open storefronts.

But there's an institution providing hope: the Naturita Community Library (NCL). Its dedicated staff has provided a safe and friendly atmosphere since 2009, when an energy-efficient, straw-bale design replaced the former 500-square-foot library building. For a community that often feels forgotten, NCL represents not only belief but also tangible investment in a brighter future.

## Innovative Programs: Early Literacy and Fun Fridays

Susan Rice, NCL's program coordinator, focuses on early literacy as well as parenting and culture. Parental involvement is often low, and there are few places for children or adults to socialize. The library's *Literacy for Little Ones* program address not only literacy and social skills but also how parents can encour-

age and teach their children. "[If] we keep repeating that literacy is important—in this generation and the generations coming up—we can't help but keep that forward motion in the community," says Rice.

Improving lives is an uphill battle in Naturita—previous programs have failed before—but the community has embraced its library. When the budget forced local schools to adopt a four-day week, the library responded by creating fun Friday programming, like lessons in pinhole cameras. The librarians also provide one-on-one tutoring, and standardized test scores have risen. Some Naturita children have never traveled to the other side of Montrose County, but the library's high-speed Internet and programming provide access to a wider world, including outer space. Through a partnership with the Pinhead Institute, a Smithsonian affiliate, children who attend a summer space camp can take photos of the stars using laptop computers to control a network of telescopes maintained by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Adults come into NCL on their own as well, whether to learn how to use a computer, get help filling out a job application, work toward a degree through online classes, read a book, or simply find a sympathetic ear. The people behind the library acknowledge

that they have a big job in front of them, but they're already seeing change, and they are excited and hopeful about the future. "We did have a vision, and that vision is working for the community," says Library Director Paul Paladino. "We've actually changed lives, and I know we'll continue to do that."

**"We've actually changed lives, and I know we'll continue to do that."**

**—Paul Paladino, Library Director**



### Community Partners

Bright Futures for Early Childhood and Families; Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service Family Link Center; Just for Kids Foundation; Montrose County Department of Human Services; The New Community Coalition; Norwood Public Library; Nucla Public Library; Paradox Community Library; Paradox Valley Charter School; Pinhead Institute; Prime Time Learning Center; Rimrocker Historical Society; Stepping Stones; Telluride Foundation; Telluride Institute; Uncompahgre Board of Cooperative Services; Uncompahgre Medical Center; University Centers of the San Miguel; West End Early Childhood Council; West End School District; Wilkinson Public Library (Telluride).

### Address

Naturita Community Library  
107 W 1st St.  
Naturita, CO 81422

**Website:** [www.montroselibrary.org](http://www.montroselibrary.org)

**Phone:** 970-865-2848

**Annual Budget:** \$2,024,900

**Full-time Staff:** 2

**Part-time Staff:** 2

**Director:** Paul Paladino

Left: Naturita residents learn computer skills at the library. Center: The library building, by Ben Knight. Right: *Literacy for Little Ones* program.

**526** population of Naturita

**4,400** square footage of the library's straw bale, geothermal facility

**400+** number of people who attended the grand opening

# Pacific Science Center

Seattle, WA

## Matching Scientists with the Public

Pacific Science Center—which in 1962 became the first U.S. institution to open as a science and technology center—seeks to go beyond just teaching visitors about science. “We want to inspire a lifelong interest in science, technology, and math,” says President and CEO R. Bryce Seidl. “Our goal is not be an educator but to inspire people to become educated.”

While the museum’s exhibits explore the fundamentals, a static space does little to help the public understand the so-called scary subjects—those places where the world is changing. “We learned early on that the best exhibition is no match for a charismatic person who is excited about his or her subject,” says Seidl. The museum’s *Portal to the Public* program fills this gap, not just by exposing the general public to cutting-edge science but by training scientists to gauge the knowledge base of their audience, use visual aids, and find inventive ways to demonstrate and explain their research. The center then helps them locate venues, whether through the *Science Cafe* program—where scientists discuss topics ranging from marine debris to ancient Egypt—or through larger presentations that typically focus on science and society. An evolutionary biologist, for example, once lectured on the

science of gene mutation and its relation to the film *I Am Legend*. The cutting-edge research discussed in *Portal to the Public* programs is displayed in the museum through a rotating *Portal* exhibit, so repeat visitors always leave having seen something new.

## Innovative Programs: Youth Outreach and Hands-on Exhibits

The iconic image of a scientist is a frazzled man wearing glasses and a white coat. But science isn’t an abstract discipline practiced only in the dusty halls of a laboratory; it’s what happens when average men and women indulge their curiosity. *Discovery Corps*, the center’s youth outreach program, aims, first and foremost, to get students excited about the world around them and to change their views of science and scientists. Students aren’t recruited for their scientific aptitude, but many become so enthusiastic that they change their life plans and choose to attend college; others find internships with research scientists or start doing their own educational presentations.

When designing its newest permanent exhibit, *Professor Wellbody’s Academy of Health & Wellness*, the center wanted to move away from the old model of “Here is a healthy lung; here is an unhealthy lung.” Seven thousand square feet of hands-on exhibits empha-

size not an accumulation of health facts but the impact of small choices made throughout the day. For example, visitors can design meals or test out the butt bouncer to see how activities that are simple fun are just as valuable a form of exercise as going to a gym for a workout. “[We] help people enjoy discovering the relevance of science in our lives,” says Seidl.

“Our goal is not to be an educator but to inspire people to become educated.”

—R. Bryce Seidl, President and CEO



### Community Partners

University of Washington, City of Bellevue, The Boeing Company, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Group Health Cooperative, Microsoft, Battelle, JPMorgan Chase & Company, PACCAR Inc, McKinstry Company, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Amgen, PEMCO Insurance, Bastyr University, City of Seattle - Seattle Center, Public Health - Seattle & King County and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Seattle Children's Hospital, Fred Meyer, Explorations in Math, Ferguson Construction, Virginia Mason Medical Center, Northwest Association for Biomedical Research, Fisher Communications, Kibble & Prentice, KCTS 9, Seattle University, Museum of Flight, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle Opera, Google.

### Address

Pacific Science Center  
200 2nd Avenue North  
Seattle, WA 98109

**Website:** [www.pacificsciencecenter.org](http://www.pacificsciencecenter.org)

**Phone:** 206-443-2001

**Annual Budget:** \$24,915,6543

**Full-time Staff:** 149

**Part-time Staff:** 235

**Director:** R. Bryce Seidl

Left: Young visitors take part in a hands-on activity at one of the center's Discovery Carts. Center: Visitors learn about distant planets and constellations in the Willard Smith Planetarium. Right: A local scientist presents new technology to visitors.

**1962** year the Pacific Science Center opened as the first U.S. science and technology center

**1,000,000** approximate number of visitors each year

**7,000** number of square feet for the new *Professor Wellbody's Academy of Health & Science* exhibit

# Park View High School Library Media Center

Sterling, VA

## School Library on the Cutting Edge

Park View High School, located in eastern Loudoun County, Virginia, caters to a unique and incredibly diverse student population, where more than two-thirds of the students are ethnic minorities and more than half of the student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch. This environment provides the school with challenges as well as opportunities for academic creativity. The Park View High School Library Media Center is determined to embrace whatever new tools and resources will engage students, foster learning, and bring students and faculty together. “Our main concern is to create a learning commons where everyone is coming together, where there is synergy and communication—a real happening, vibrant place that sparks creativity and learning,” says Library Media Specialist Candace Main Rush.

Rush and fellow librarian Jennifer Fisher operate on the philosophy that the library is there to serve students and faculty in whatever they need. When teachers wanted to incorporate videos into school presentations, the librarians designed a class on how to use Movie Maker. When students were interested in Web 2.0, Rush and Fisher incorporated a variety of interactive, web-based programs into the curriculum while also teaching Internet safety and responsible web research. Many students

lack computers or Internet access at home, so the library extended its hours before and after school, remaining open from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. As many as 250 students can be seen studying, using the computers, or working on class projects before the school day begins.

## Innovative Programs: Concerts, Community Puzzles, and Story Hours

On November and February mornings, students may come to listen to *November Notes* or *Guitars on the Go*—concert series presented by the school’s multicultural guitar ensemble. The concerts were so popular, parents organized an evening guitar coffee house. Students and faculty alike may ponder over the community puzzle table, where jigsaw puzzles not only create teams out of students who might not otherwise socialize but also establish student–faculty relationships outside of the classroom. Coffee in the library office attracts faculty members, who can then discover library resources they can employ in their classrooms. The library’s focus has even gone multigenerational, as the technology, art, and early education students have worked together to create a *Book Barn* area for preschool children’s story hour.

Dr. Virginia M. Minshew, principal of Park View High School, describes the atmosphere of

the library as something unique in her career of thirty-two years. “When you walk in, there is always something for you to look at. It’s a very engaging place.”

“We want to be the hub of the school community,” says Fisher. “At the core of all we do is cultivating a love of reading. With the drive to read comes the foundation of preparing students for jobs we cannot yet imagine. *That* is a powerful tool.”

**“A real happening, vibrant place that sparks creativity and learning.”**

**—Candace Rush, Media Specialist**



### Community Partners

Loudoun County Public Library; Loudoun County Farm Bureau; Loudoun County Literacy Council; Washington Redskins (provided grant for the *Coaches in the Classroom* program to hold study halls in the library after school).

### Address

Park View High School Library Media Center  
400 West Laurel Avenue  
Sterling, VA 20064

**Website:** <http://lcps.org/pvhs>

**Phone:** 571-434-4500

**Annual Budget:** \$11,655

**Full-time Staff:** 3

**Part-time Staff:** 0

**Principal:** Dr. Virginia M. Minshe

Left: Students use library computers as they make recordings for Spanish class. Middle: Following the library's Movie Maker lesson, students search for French recipes to demonstrate during their cooking show videos. Right: World View musicians delight crowds during *Guitars on the Go* concerts before school. Photos by Candace Main Rush.

**9+** number of hours the center is open on a weekday

**225** average number of students who use the library before class

**35** average number of classes taught or using the library each week

# Shaler North Hills Library

Glenshaw, PA

## Books and So Much More

Shaler North Hills Library (SNHL) may appear formal and stately on the outside, but anyone entering its doors will find a bustling environment where families battle over book trivia, teens enjoy all-day reading marathons, and adults attend standing-room-only programs filled with art and music. “We’re not a quiet library by any stretch,” laughs Director Sharon McRae.

Inspired by its motto, “Books and So Much More,” SNHL has devoted itself to creating the “more” through actively getting out into the community. The number of staff inside the library at any given time represents only the tip of the iceberg, as other staff members are out providing services. The goal is to engage in a holistic, all-encompassing approach to library services. This ears-to-the-ground, out-and-about strategy allows SNHL to respond to the needs of the community. For example, when a local artist noted that there weren’t many nearby venues in which to show artwork, the library responded by hosting annual art shows and providing a gallery space to showcase the work of local artists and students. “Because of the outreach that we do, we hear what people need or are looking for,” says McRae. “It’s fun to see what will connect people.”

The SNHL “People’s University” encompasses five literacies—basic, information, civic

and social, health, and financial—for adults through language classes, computer training, book groups, art and music programs, speakers’ series, and the award-winning Jazz Extravaganza. A part-time teen librarian creates programs for teens and tweens, including the All You Can Read Buffet, an award-winning, daylong reading marathon, and addresses self-esteem issues in girls through Savvy Cinderella. Families participate in activities like Family Battle of the Books, in which librarians pose questions to test reading comprehension.

## Innovative Programs in Early Literacy

But the library’s main strength lies in its programs for children from birth through five years old. SNHL is a nationally designated Family Place Library—a library network dedicated to early literacy workshops for children, their parents and their caregivers. “Early literacy is where we need to be, whether in the library or out in the community,” says McRae. SNHL’s devotion to fostering early literacy is such that it actually increased programming after suffering an \$85,000 budget cut in early 2010, offering science and math programs like Discovery Kids and Wee School, Spanish and ASL classes, kid aerobics, and weekly early literacy classes. Anti-bullying prevention is addressed through Rumble in the Jungle—a puppet

show that has reached over 7,000 kids in area schools and was honored as a best practice by the Pennsylvania Library Association. McRae cites Reading with Rover as a particularly fun and innovative partnership: once a month, the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society brings certified therapy dogs to the library, giving children an opportunity practice their reading skills.

Fifty thousand visitors participated in SNHL programs in 2011, a 10,000-person increase over 2010. SNHL is on target to see a seven-percent increase in visitors to programs for 2012. “The whole community built SNHL and the library’s success reflects their commitment.”

**“It’s our community who built SNHL  
and the library’s success reflects their  
commitment.”**

**—Sharon McRae, Director**





### Community Partners

Allegheny County Library Association; Allegheny Intermediate Unit; Anchor Point Ministries; Autumn House Press; Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; Carnegie Museum of Natural History; Electronic Information Network; Etna Neighborhood Improvement Committee; Friends of SNHL; Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council; Kearns Spirituality Center; Kiwanis Club of Glenshaw; Regional Asset District; Pennsylvania Library Association; The Pittsburgh Foundation; Shaler Area School District; Shaler Garden Club; Shaler Township; Western Pennsylvania Humane Society.

### Address

Shaler North Hills Library  
1822 Mt. Royal Blvd.  
Glenshaw, PA 15116

**Website:** [www.shalerlibrary.org](http://www.shalerlibrary.org)

**Phone:** 412-486-0211

**Annual Budget:** \$1,029,000

**Full-time Staff:** 6

**Part-time Staff:** 36

**Director:** Sharon McRae

Left: The library's *Book Babies* program. Center: A preschool group visits the library. Right: Shaler Garden Club and SNHL Great Garden Tour.

**10,000** increase in visitors from 2010 to 2011

**\$85,000** budget cut—after which SNHL increased programming

**168** families competing in *Family Battle of the Books* in 2011

# Previous Winners of the National Medal

## 2011

**Alachua County Library District**, Gainesville, FL  
**Brooklyn Museum**, Brooklyn, NY  
**Columbus Metropolitan Library**, Columbus, OH  
**EdVenture Children's Museum**, Columbia, SC  
**Erie Art Museum**, Erie, PA  
**Hill Museum & Manuscript Library**,  
Collegeville, MN  
**Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**, Richmond, VA  
**Madison Children's Museum**, Madison, WI  
**San José Public Library**, San José, CA  
**Weippe Public Library & Discovery Center**,  
Weippe, ID

## 2010

**Conner Prairie Interactive History Park**, Fishers, IN  
**Explora**, Albuquerque, NM  
**Japanese American National Museum**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Mississippi Museum of Art**, Jackson, MS  
**Nashville Public Library**, Nashville, TN  
**The New York Botanical Garden**, New York, NY  
**Patchogue-Medford Library**, Patchogue, NY  
**Peter White Public Library**, Marquette, MI  
**Rangeview Library District and Anythink Libraries**,  
Adams County, CO  
**West Bloomfield Township Public Library**,  
West Bloomfield Township, MI

## 2009

**Braille Institute Library Services**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Children's Museum of Pittsburgh**, Pittsburgh, PA  
**Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal**, Cincinnati, OH  
**Gail Borden Public Library**, Elgin, IL  
**Indianapolis Museum of Art**, Indianapolis, IN  
**Multnomah County Library**, Portland, OR  
**Museum of Science & Industry**, Tampa, FL  
**Pritzker Military Library**, Chicago, IL  
**Stark County District Library**, Canton, OH  
**Tennessee Aquarium**, Chattanooga, TN

## 2008

**Buffalo Bill Historical Center**, Cody, WY  
**The Franklin Institute**, Philadelphia, PA  
**General Lew Wallace Study and Museum**, Crawfordsville, IN  
**Jane Stern Dorado Community Library, Inc.**, Dorado, PR  
**Kansas City Public Library**, Kansas City, MO  
**Lower East Side Tenement Museum**, New York, NY  
**Miami-Dade Public Library System**, Miami, FL  
**Norton Museum of Art**, West Palm Beach, FL  
**Skidompha Library**, Damariscotta, ME  
**Skokie Public Library**, Skokie, IL

## 2007

**Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, Birmingham, AL  
**Brookfield Zoo of the Chicago Zoological Society**, Brookfield, IL  
**Georgetown County Library**, Georgetown, SC  
**Kim Yerton Branch of the Humboldt County Library**, Hoopa, CA

**Memphis Public Library & Information Center**, Memphis, TN  
**National Museum of Women in the Arts**, Washington, DC  
**The Newberry Library**, Chicago, IL  
**Ocean County Library**, Toms River, NJ  
**Oregon Museum of Science and Industry**, Portland, OR  
**Vermont Historical Society**, Barre, VT

### 2006

**Artrain USA**, Ann Arbor, MI  
**Frankfort Community Public Library**, Frankfort, IN  
**John G. Shedd Aquarium**, Chicago, IL  
**Lincoln Children's Zoo**, Lincoln, NE  
**Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County**,  
Charlotte, NC  
**San Antonio Public Library**, San Antonio, TX

### 2005

**COSI Toledo**, Toledo, OH  
**Johnson County Library**, Overland Park, KS  
**Levine Museum of the New South**, Charlotte, NC  
**Mathews Memorial Library**, Mathews, VA  
**Pratt Museum**, Homer, AK  
**Saint Paul Public Library**, Saint Paul, MN

### 2004

**Chicago Botanic Garden**, Chicago, IL  
**Flint Public Library**, Flint, MI  
**Mayagüez Children's Library, Inc.**, Mayagüez, PR  
**The Regional Academic Health Center Medical Library of the  
University of Texas Health Science Center**, San Antonio, TX

**Western Folklife Center, Inc.**, Elko, NE  
**Zoological Society of San Diego**, San Diego, CA

### 2003

**Bozeman Public Library**, Bozeman, MT  
**Carnegie Science Center**, Pittsburgh, PA  
**Free Library of Philadelphia**, Philadelphia, PA  
**Pocahontas County Free Libraries**, Marlinton, WV  
**San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts**, San Angelo, TX  
**USS Constitution Museum**, Boston, MA

### 2002

**Boundary County District Library**, Bonners Ferry, ID  
**Hartford Public Library**, Hartford, CT  
**Please Touch Museum**, Philadelphia, PA  
**Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art**, Loretto, PA  
**Southwest Georgia Regional Public Library System**,  
Bainbridge, GA  
**Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo**, Bronx, NY

### 2001

**Alaska Resources Library and Information Services**,  
Anchorage, AK  
**Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose**, San Jose, CA  
**Hancock County Library System**, Bay St. Louis, MS  
**Miami Museum of Science**, Miami, FL  
**New England Aquarium**, Boston, MA  
**Providence Public Library**, Providence, RI

## Previous Winners of the National Medal (continued)

### 2000 (the first year libraries participated in the program)

**Albright-Knox Art Gallery**, Buffalo, NY  
**Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository**, Kodiak, AK  
**B.B. Comer Memorial Library**, Sylacauga, AL  
**Queens Borough Public Library**, Jamaica, NY  
**Simon Wiesenthal Center Library and Archives**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Urie Elementary School Library**, Lyman, WY  
**Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia**, Beckley, WV

### 1999

**Lincoln Park Zoo**, Chicago, IL  
**Nevada Museum of Art**, Reno, NV  
**St. Simons Island Lighthouse Museum**,  
St. Simons Island, GA

### 1998

**Belknap Mill Society**, Laconia, NH  
**Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village**,  
Dearborn, MI  
**New Jersey Historical Society**, Newark, NJ

### 1997

**The Children's Museum of Indianapolis**, Indianapolis, IN  
**The Museum of Fine Arts**, Houston, TX  
**National Aquarium in Baltimore**, Baltimore, MD

### 1996

**The Corcoran Gallery of Art**, Washington, DC  
**The Field Museum**, Chicago, IL  
**The Natural Science Center of Greensboro**, Greensboro, NC

### 1995

**Brooklyn Children's Museum**, Brooklyn, NY  
**The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum**, Chicago, IL  
**Montshire Museum of Science**, Norwich, VT  
**The Wing Luke Asian Museum**, Seattle, WA

### 1994

**Brukner Nature Center**, Troy, OH  
**The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens**, Jacksonville, FL  
**Missouri Historical Society**, St. Louis, MO

### 1996

**The Corcoran Gallery of Art**, Washington, DC  
**The Field Museum**, Chicago, IL  
**The Natural Science Center of Greensboro**, Greensboro, NC

### 1995

**Brooklyn Children's Museum**, Brooklyn, NY  
**The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum**, Chicago, IL  
**Montshire Museum of Science**, Norwich, VT  
**The Wing Luke Asian Museum**, Seattle, WA

### 1994

**Brukner Nature Center**, Troy, OH  
**The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens**, Jacksonville, FL  
**Missouri Historical Society**, St. Louis, MO

# About the National Medal for Museum and Library Services

Since 1994, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service has honored outstanding institutions, 65 museums and 47 libraries, that have made significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Selected institutions demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The winners are selected by the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in consultation with the National Museum and Library Services Board. Winners are honored at a National Medal award ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

Beginning with the 2009 awardees, personal stories demonstrating the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions are being documented through a cooperative agreement between IMLS and StoryCorps, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

## About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums.

The mission of IMLS is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. We provide leadership through research, policy development, and grant making.



# About the National Museum and Library Services Board

The National Museum and Library Services Board advises the Institute's director on selections for the National Medals. This Board is an advisory body that includes President-appointed and Senate-confirmed individuals with expertise in, or commitment to, library, museum, and information services. Informed by its collectively vast experience and knowledge, the Board also advises the Institute's director on general policy, practices, and coordination with other federal agencies and offices.

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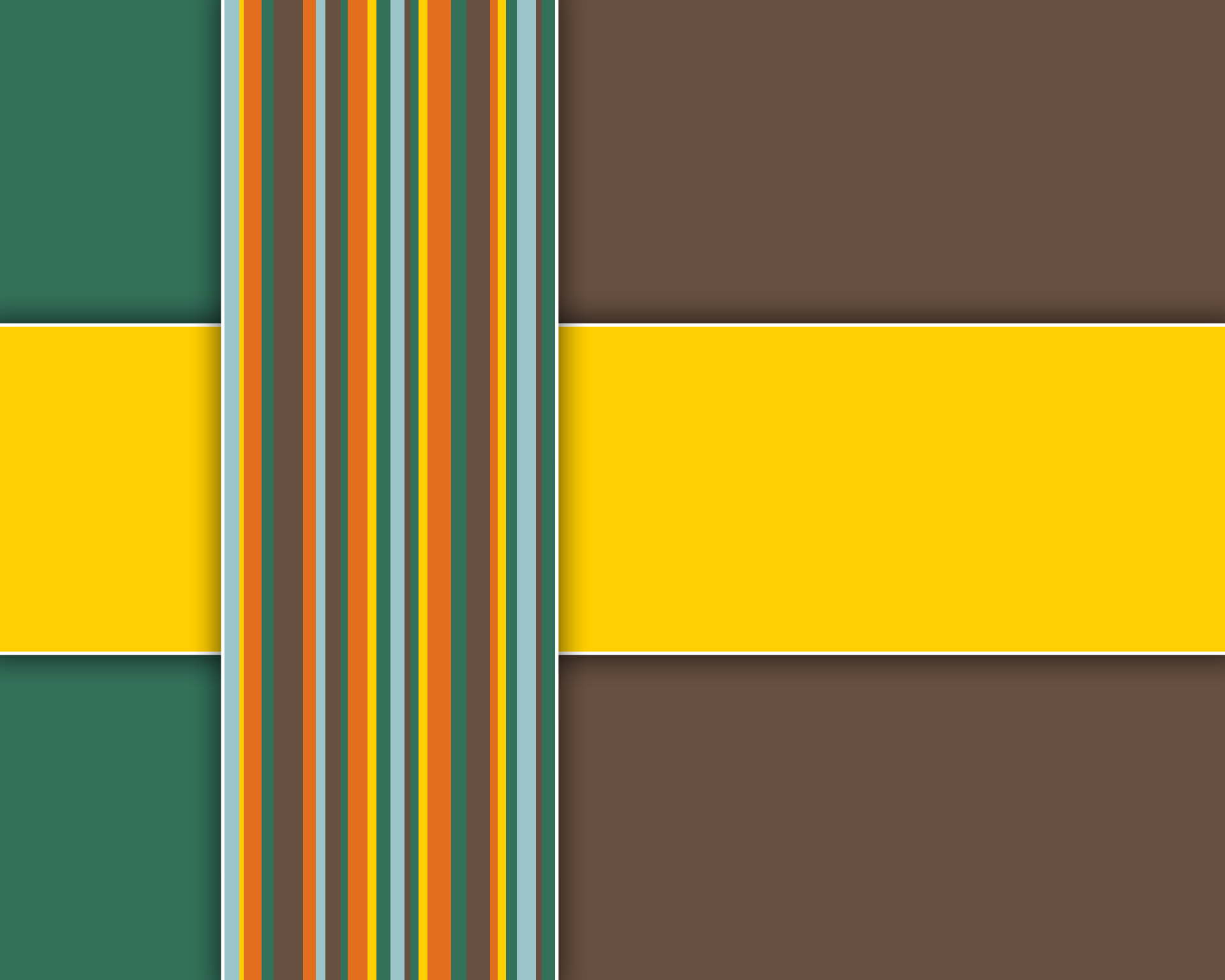
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