



## Association of Art Museum Directors

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### August 2009 Message from AAMD's Executive Director

This summer, AAMD has been working on an initiative to document the many ways in which art museums improve the lives of people in their communities. The focus is on the non-traditional programs offered by museums that frequently go unnoticed. With our members' help, AAMD has gathered more than 150 published stories. Here are just a few:

- The Philbrook Museum of Art, in Tulsa, converted its formal flower beds into a vegetable garden and donated the crops to a local Food Bank.
- The Art Institute of Chicago and MFA, Boston, are using art to help medical students develop visual thinking strategies to improve their observation and diagnostic skills.
- At the International Center for Photography in New York and the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, troubled teenagers and homeless families are using cameras to explore how people live: participants learn about themselves and others, re-envisioning their identities and communities in the process.
- The Wolfsonian at Florida International University draws upon its extensive collection of propaganda art to teach school children across the state how to "read" cigarette ads. The program has been remarkably effective at altering student's attitudes about smoking.
- The Contemporary Museum in Honolulu and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Alabama have outreach programs for military families, including family events and free admission.
- A growing number of museums are now offering programs for Alzheimer's patients, including the Amon Carter Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Neuberger Museum of Art, and the Phoenix Art Museum. and

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to develop a series of community impact reports—incorporating stories, data, and maps—to demonstrate a compelling aspect of the significant contributions art museums make in communities throughout the country. When the project is completed, AAMD will post the reports on our website, part of our ongoing effort to lead the public discussion about the value of art museums in society.

Janet Landay  
Executive Director  
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