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The Wallace Foundation Releases New Case Study That Shows How The Contemporary Jewish Museum Built a Following Among Families in San Francisco

Study caps a series of 10 reports that shows how arts organizations across the country expanded, deepened, or diversified audiences

NEW YORK, June 23, 2016 – The Wallace Foundation today released a new case study analyzing strategies San Francisco’s Contemporary Jewish Museum (CJM) used to broaden and diversify its audience and engage families of all backgrounds. The study is the final installment in the [Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences](#) series, a set of reports that explores 10 organizations’ efforts to build audiences and offers lessons any arts organization can use. Each of the organizations featured in the series participated in the Wallace Excellence Award (WEA) initiative, an effort to help arts organizations cultivate new audiences that ended in 2014.

The final WEA study, [*Converting Family Into Fans: How The Contemporary Jewish Museum Expanded its Reach*](#), describes a series of steps the museum used to attract families with children. Guided by research and focus groups, the museum launched a series of new programs and local partnerships that resulted in a nearly nine-fold increase in family visitors over seven years.

“The Wallace Foundation’s WEA initiative enabled us to engage more families of all backgrounds, ultimately allowing us to transform from a niche museum to one that serves a multigenerational, diverse population,” said Fraidy Aber, Director of Education and Public Programs of The Contemporary Jewish Museum. “The grant allowed us to create and test new programming designed to open our doors widely and connect families with exhibitions, as well as organize impactful partnerships that have turned The CJM into a family destination. Through focus groups supported by the grant, we were able to identify and address obstacles before moving forward with our plans.”

The Contemporary Jewish Museum launched new programs designed to attract and engage San Francisco families of all backgrounds and eliminate financial barriers to their participation. It created exhibits based on the works of well-known Jewish artists and authors that were designed to appeal to both adults and children. It also established regular programs to guide families through such exhibits, including family-oriented tours, special gallery hours for preschoolers, opportunities to explore art with teaching artists, and activity packs families can use to help children interact with art. The CJM also created partnerships with local libraries, preschools, and elementary schools, involving teachers, students, and parents in workshops and special museum visits. The museum also employed several tactics to make its offerings more affordable for families, including free admission days with family activities. Since 2008, The CJM has solidified its status as a family destination, welcoming more than

12,000 family visitors a year—compared to 1,300 before it started its audience-building effort. Families have gone from 10 percent of all visitors to 15 percent, and have exceeded this figure in some years.

The Contemporary Jewish Museum was one of 54 visual and performance arts organizations that received Wallace Excellence Awards, grants The Wallace Foundation offered to bolster these organizations' efforts to cultivate new audiences and build the lasting relationships that allow the arts to flourish. Recipient organizations were based in six cities across the country: Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle. They explored a wide range of audience-building goals and strategies, from engaging young adults and racial minorities to testing new programs and technologies. Across the 46 WEA recipients that provided reliable data, the results were promising. Over a period that averaged three years, the organizations seeking an increase in the size of their overall audience saw median gains of 27 percent, while those targeting growth of a specific segment saw median gains of 60 percent.

The [Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences](#) series presents in-depth examinations of 10 of the organizations and their audience-building projects. Bob Harlow, market research expert and lead author of each of the reports, also used these analyses to identify nine practices any arts organization can use to increase the chances of success in engaging audiences. These practices are explained in Harlow's report, [The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences](#). The Wallace Foundation also recently released Harlow's [Taking Out the Guesswork: Using Research to Build Arts Audiences](#), a free guide to help arts organizations use market research to build meaningful connections with different audiences. The two publications, along with the 10 case studies, are available for free download at www.wallacefoundation.org.

"The Wallace Excellence Awards initiative has embodied the foundation's enduring commitment to the arts by allowing organizations across the country to pursue major audience-building goals and supporting the development of lessons that can be applied across the field," said Wallace Director of Arts Daniel Windham. "Through analysis of the work of the WEA organizations, we have identified a set of common practices that can help arts organizations increase their audiences. Although this is the final case study for the WEA program, we are continuing to build on what we have learned in our ongoing initiatives."

"The successes in the WEA initiative demonstrate that organizations can build new relationships when they take the time to get to know new audiences and develop ways to help those audiences get to know them," Harlow said. "It takes time and perseverance but it can be done, and the resulting Wallace studies illustrate multiple approaches and real-life examples of organizations overcoming the various challenges that come with attracting new audiences. Their experiences and expertise can now benefit the entire field."

Following the Wallace Excellence Awards, Wallace launched the [Building Audiences for Sustainability](#) initiative in 2015. The initiative is providing support and funding to 26 outstanding performing arts organizations across the United States to develop, implement, analyze, and learn from new audience-building practices. The participating organizations are exploring a range of innovative programs to attract new audiences while retaining current ones and building a financial foundation for sustainable growth. Their experiences and accomplishments will be independently documented and analyzed, providing additional resources for the entire field.

About The Wallace Foundation

The Wallace Foundation seeks to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children and foster the vitality of arts for everyone. The foundation has an unusual approach: funding efforts to test innovative ideas for solving important public problems, conducting research to find out what works and what doesn't, and to fill key knowledge gaps – and then communicating the results to help others.

Wallace, which works nationally, has five major initiatives underway:

- *BUILDING AUDIENCES FOR THE ARTS: Enabling arts organizations to bring the arts to a broader and more diverse group of people.*
- *SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: Strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement.*
- *AFTERSCHOOL: Helping cities make good afterschool time programs available to many more children.*
- *ARTS EDUCATION: Expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens.*
- *SUMMER AND EXPANDED LEARNING: Improving summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged children, and enriching and expanding the school day.*

Find out more at www.wallacefoundation.org.

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