

Museum on Main Street
2008 National Planning Conferences
Sharing Best Practices

Best Practices Model: **Working with Partners and Committees**

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MoMS Tour(s) That You've Coordinated (exhibition and year): Key Ingredients 2007-2008

What needs did you identify among your local hosts that led you to develop this component of your MoMS tour? Or, how did this all come about?

The Council began by identifying our own goals for MOMS that included raising the Council's visibility across the state and creating long-term regional partnerships. These goals included two of the Council's institutional goals that grew out of recent organizational strategic planning --- 1) engage the Council with groups and individuals that are representative of all Maryland constituencies and 2) develop partnerships to leverage and maximize the impact of the Council's programs.

Recognizing that one of the goals of MOMS is to lay the foundation for future collaborations between the local hosts and the state council AND to build community pride in places where the exhibits are placed, we urged host sites to develop their own network of community partnerships.

What council resources/expertise were you able to utilize? What partner resources/expertise?

Council Resources / Expertise

- 1) Utilized MHC staff contacts and board contacts to identify potential partners and funders.
- 2) Two MHC Board members with interest and expertise in subject area and in museums served on Key Ingredients Advisory Committee
- 3) Board member also on board of corporation assisted with bringing funding proposal to corporation for consideration
- 4) Council staff expertise in marketing, grant writing, fund raising and program planning.
- 5) Staff developed Key Ingredients themed programs that built on successful long-standing Council programs such as Chautauqua and Speakers Bureau.

Partner Resources / Expertise

- 1) **Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)**— grant funding for professional development at host sites, representation on Advisory Committee through both the Museum Advancement Program and the Cultural Conservation Program. Helped publicize and promote in museum community, use of mailing lists for rfp, recommended museum consultants for local host sites (funding, promotion, counsel)
- 2) **Maryland Traditions** (folklife program)—representation on Advisory Committee, host site (Frostburg University), lent photos for p.r. (used on brochures and website), supplied mailing list for rfp (promotion, counsel, programming)
- 3) **Maryland Department of Agriculture** – small amount of funding (\$2,000) (funding)
- 4) **Maryland Office of Tourism** – website link, approved distribution of brochures at state-run Welcome Centers across MD, distributed press packets to their tourism contacts. (Counsel, promotion)
- 5) **Maryland Historic Foodways Guild** – representation on Advisory Committee, members served on MHC speakers bureau and contributed programs at local host sites, helped promote through their membership (counsel, programming, promotion)

- 6) **Hagerstown /Washington County Convention and Visitor's Bureau** (underwrote expenses for opening reception, helped extensively with promotion and opening)
- 7) **Maryland State Arts Council** – representation on Advisory Committee (counsel)
- 8) **Maryland Heritage Tourism Authority** (counsel, promotion, regional offices grant funding to local host sites)
- 9) **Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development** – representation on Advisory Committee (counsel)
- 10) **American Institute of Food and Wine**, Baltimore Chapter (programming)

Host Site Partners Resources and Expertise Programming Resources for Host Sites

Shippensburg University Fashion Museum and Archive, Washington County Homemakers, Hagerstown City Market, Antietam National Battlefield, Washington County Cooperative Extension, Master Gardener Volunteers, Maryland Humanities Council for opening reception programs.

Dorchester County Museums and Attractions Coalition, Dorchester County Department of Tourism, Richardson Maritime Museum, Skipjack Nathan of Dorchester, Dorchester Art Center, Dorchester County Public Library, University of Maryland at Horn Point, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Dorchester County Agricultural Extension Service, Dorchester County Public Schools, Cambridge Garden Club, Chesapeake College, Maryland Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, South Dorchester Folk Museum, Dorchester County Garden Club, Historical Society of Talbot County, Adkins Arboretum, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

Frostburg University folklore students, Garrett County Historical Society, Elkridge Nature Works, Main Street Book Store, Frostburg University Library, Frostburg Museum, Grantsville Museum, House of Yoder, MD Native Plant Society, Stanton's Mill, Deep Creek Cellars Winery, local farmers, MD Dept of the Environment, Garrett County Agricultural Extension, Allegany County Public Schools, Palace Theatre, Main Street Frostburg, Western MD Chapter of the American Chemical Society, MD Humanities Council Speakers Bureau

Calvert Marine Museum, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Friends of the Library, local restaurants, Calvert County Historical Society, Maryland Humanities Council Speakers Bureau.

Cecil County Arts Council, Elkton Chamber and Alliance, downtown Elkton restaurants and businesses, University of Delaware, local farms, orchards and bed and breakfasts. Maryland Humanities Council Speakers Bureau

Prince Georges County Memorial library system, Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce, City of Bowie Government partners, Radio History Society

Marketing / Funding Resources for Host Sites

Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay, local restaurants Dorchester County, WAL-Mart/Cambridge, Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area, Dorchester County Council, Powell Realtors, Dorchester County Department of Tourism, Calvert Marine Museum, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Friends of the Calvert Library, Calvert Library Foundation, discounts on ads from local Calvert County papers, College of Southern Maryland, Comcast, Southern Maryland Online, Southern Maryland Regional Library systems, Prince Georges County CVB

What were the steps involved in implementation?

- 1) Identifying Council goals for MOMS - goals included raising the Council's visibility across the state and creating regional partnerships.
- 2) Identifying strategic partnerships on the state level
- 3) Making contacts and setting up meetings with potential state-wide resources / partners
- 4) Forming Advisory Committee with representatives from potential partner organizations
- 5) Identifying regions within the state where the Council had a low-profile and where we wanted to develop significant regional partnerships. In our case, the eastern and far western parts of the state were target areas.
- 6) Making site visits to potential host sites. Cultivating host sites in target areas. Successfully selecting sites in all regions of the state and in target areas. Two of six selected sites had never worked with MHC before.
- 7) Attending program planning meetings at host sites with the sites' local partners.
- 8) Writing grant to state's Museum Advancement Program for professional development and institutional enhancement money for local sites. Consulting with host sites to determine needs. Administering grant.
- 9) Attending exhibit openings and programming at local sites to increase Council's visibility in the region.

What were the results?

The Advisory Committee formed for this MOMs exhibition proved invaluable particularly in the planning stages. They assisted the Council by:

- identifying people and resources for related programming
- providing contacts to key people within state agencies and other organizations
- identifying sources for potential funding
- conducting programming as part of the Council's Key Ingredients Speakers Bureau
- leading a docent training workshop (Charley Camp in Frostburg)
- writing articles for Council publications
- recruiting host sites
- accompanying state coordinator to meetings with potential funders / partners
- providing input on the selection of host sites
- providing access to their organizational mailing lists
- identifying museum consultants to assist host sites in professional development
- providing photos for brochures and media
- providing interviews for media

The strategic partnership with the Maryland Historical Trust's Museum Advancement Program increased the Council's ability to further professional development and institutional enhancement at host sites. In this area, the Council's goals dovetailed perfectly with MHT's Museum Advancement Program. The Council applied for and received a grant of \$15,000 from MHT. This money, along with CASSA funds, provided an additional \$3,000 for each host site for professional development/ institutional enhancement.

Host sites used this money to send staff and /or volunteers to regional and national professional conferences (Small Museums Association, ALA, AASLH Historic House Administration Workshop); bring in outside consultants to lead workshops for their communities on collections care, exhibition development, and docent training; expand their resources for cataloging collections; purchase archival storage materials; purchase computers

for interactive components of exhibitions, exhibit cases, gallery lighting, and gallery enhancements.

By encouraging the local hosts to work with partners within their communities the Council was able to broaden our regional outreach. All sites worked with local partners. Three out of six developed extensive community networks for programming and marketing. The others partnered with selective groups within their community. Two sites hosted museum training workshops open to smaller museums in their regions. In some cases, community partners utilized Council's Speakers Bureau and opportunity grants for programming related to the MOMS exhibit.

What adjustments (if any) did you make along the way?

Although many people expressed interested in the project, not all the organizations we wanted to partner with worked out. Often, there was just not a practical match that could easily translate into programming or funding. At times, we had to scale back on our plans.

The Council did not receive a large number of responses to the rfp for host sites, so we went to target areas to personally recruit three of the six host sites.

What's been the short and long term benefit to the local hosts?

Community groups and local partners have donated collections, archives, photos to the host museums. Partners helped bring in new audiences inspiring museums to increase their open hours. Host sites have acquired permanent gallery enhancements such as cases, lighting, interactive computer stations, and the skills to create more professional exhibits. New members, new volunteers, new museum shop. Greater press coverage. New professional networks to rely on for help with exhibit development and design, docent training, programming, etc.. First time working with local school districts, greater visibility within the community,

"Our partnership with the Marine Museum was really strengthened by this event. In the short term...they have actually created another display for us to go along with another program! This was great for them as well because it introduced a new exhibit they are opening. As for the professional development piece...one training in particular really stands out for our team and that was a day-long event that reinforced the roll of libraries as the place for civic engagement and civil discourse. I feel like it was a great training that will really strengthen the civil discourse series we are currently planning for this fall. Our partnerships will be critical for this giant undertaking as well...both for marketing and for engaging the community". From Robyn Truslow, Calvert Library

What's been the short and long term benefit to the state council?

(long term-- hard to tell in our case – since this is our first MOMS experience and the exhibit is, only now, on it's way back to the Smithsonian)

Sponsoring a state-wide tour of a MOMS exhibition brought the Council to all four corners of the state; enabling us to develop long-term partnerships with the host communities and achieve greater visibility among new audiences particularly in rural areas. Two of the host sites were new partners for the Council. The other four host sites had previously sponsored Speakers Bureau presentations or received opportunity grants, but had never worked extensively with the Council. Instead of working with partners in a "hit and run" fashion through other Council programs such as Speakers Bureau or Chautauqua, MOMS has

enabled the Council to deepen our work in the host communities, increasing our visibility on a local level by developing sustained and broad-reaching partnerships.

Key Ingredients host sites are now more involved in other Council programs. One local coordinator now serves on the Council's One Book Advisory Committee, another serves on the Council's Speakers Bureau, one site is a partner in the Council's program "Poetry's Here @ Your Maryland Library", another site has applied for a major grant, and four local coordinators will join Council staff in an upcoming panel presentation at a professional conference.

Our state-wide partnerships with the Maryland Historical Trust enabled us to maximize the impact of MOMS on the local level by providing money and expertise to the local host sites for professional development. MOMS provided the Council's first experience with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development and, with their assistance, the Council's Key Ingredient's brochure was systematically distributed in new venues across the state increasing Council visibility.

Our Key Ingredients Advisory Committee has brought new talent to the Council and introduced us to new organizations and potential future collaborations.

What advice would you have for other state tour coordinators trying to make a similar impact in this area?

Cast a wide net in the initial phases, but have a game plan. Why are you approaching these partners? What do you think they might do for you? Be willing to listen to their ideas and creative suggestions. Find what benefits both organizations. Not every potential partnership is workable for this particular project. However, all contacts are good contacts. Keep people and organizations in mind for future collaborative projects.

Do you have any files, forms, documents or digital images illustrating this component of your MoMS tour(s) that we could post on-line to share with others?

Forms: Advisory Committee Job Description
Advisory Committee sample letter of invitation

Would you be willing to serve as a mentor to other state coordinators, advising them on this topic? If so, please indicate the best way for them to contact you.

Ok. Either email jwortman@mdhc.org or phone 410-763-6680