

YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

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This year, the Education Department expanded its offerings and sought to provide engaging and inclusive programming to attract new attendees to our family programs and field trips.

FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Interactive field trip programs continue to be a popular choice for school groups. Of the non-self-guided school groups, 47% attended one of our Junior Archaeologist, Artifact Analysis, Ancient Innovators, or Time Travelers programs, totaling over 1,900 students from 55 schools.

The Oriental Institute continues to prioritize its participation in Amplify, a collective of arts organizations at the University of Chicago offering K–12 programming. We partnered with the Smart Museum to offer multi-site field trips to over 780 students from 12 schools throughout the year.

We updated our fees in December 2017, with the goal of simplifying our fee structure and increasing revenue. To keep our museum accessible to any school or youth groups who wish to visit, we developed the Field Trip Funding Application, through which we waive fees for tour and tour and film programs for up to 120 students. Because of these changes, we can now offer free programming to groups over 60, while still increasing revenue.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our annual Halloween party, Mummies Night, saw another successful year in 2017, attracting 400 visitors (figs. 1–4). From over 80 post-event surveys, we learned that for nearly half of attendees, this was their first visit to the Oriental Institute, and that the majority of visitors were unaffiliated with the University. Mummies Night thus attracts many new visitors to the museum and reaches a diverse audience of community and University members. Using this data, we applied for and were awarded a \$1,500 grant for Mummies Night 2018 through the Campus-Wide Inclusive Climate RFP. With this grant, we can continue to offer Mummies Night as a free, welcoming program, without cutting activities or raising costs.



ABOVE: Figure 1. Mummies Night visitors compete in the Mummy Wrap Race. Photo by David Turner.



ABOVE: Figures 2–4. Mummies Night at the OI, October 2017. Photos by David Turner.

The Nowruz Celebration, a family program celebrating the Persian New Year, continued to grow in its third year, with attendance increasing 39% from 2017. Voluntary donations underwrote all of the expenses of the program, allowing us to offer a free program without cost to the Oriental Institute. Our partnership with the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago and the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America continues to be the driving force behind this event, and we look forward to future Nowruz Celebrations with them.

We diversified our workshops this year with the addition of two new hands-on workshops. With PhD candidate Sasha Rohret, we developed “Ancient Animals,” focusing on zooarchaeology (fig. 5). Assisted by fourth-year undergraduate facilitators Sylvia Cheever and Sebastian Otero, we also redeveloped a previously discontinued program on bioarchaeology, “All Bones About It” (fig. 9).

Our partnership with the Girl Scouts continues to thrive, with many Girl Scouts attending our hands-on workshops. We have developed new fun patches for our newest workshops, which will further promote Girl Scout attendance (figs. 10 and 11).

Our efforts offering hands-on workshops have paid off. Our strongest growth has been in workshop attendees, which increased by 28.7% from last year. Overall, our attendance at workshops and family programs increased by 6.4%, although the number of programs decreased overall by 10%. We plan to continue to offer high-quality programs that attract substantial numbers of visitors, over offering larger numbers of programs with fewer attendees. This allows us to better focus our resources and most effectively engage visiting families.



LEFT: Figure 5. Kids take a close look at real animal bones to learn about how zooarchaeologists work in “Ancient Animals.”
ABOVE: Figure 6. What’s Up, King Tut?



ABOVE: Figures 7–8. Junior Archeologist.
BELOW: Figure 9. Kids learn how bioarchaeologists excavate and study human bones in “All Bones About It.”



LEFT: Figures 10–11. The new bioarchaeology and zooarchaeology fun patches will be available beginning in summer 2018 and feature artifacts from the Oriental Institute collections.