

**PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*Overleaf: Restoration of Neo-Assyrian wall painting from Residence K, Khorsabad, Iraq. Charles B. Altman, ca. 1935. Archival print. 75 x 48 cm. Collection of the Oriental Institute. Oriental Institute digital image D. 17478. Picturing the Past Catalog No. 20. Photo by Anna Ressman*

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Carole Krucoff

### Introduction

Innovation, productivity, and collaboration were the watchwords for Public Education this past year. The vitality of the department is due to the dedication and creativity of its staff and interns, its extraordinary volunteers, and the support and expertise of Oriental Institute faculty, staff, and students. This past year we worked together to develop public programs that attracted 5,689 adults, children, and their families — more than 10 percent of the Museum’s 50,000 visitors. Our programs ranged from concerts in partnership with the Hyde Park Jazz Festival to seminars where museum experts offered rare glimpses of the fascinating living histories of ancient artifacts as they traveled “from ground to gallery” (fig. 1).

We also provided more than 5,100 school and community group visitors with a docent led-tour of the galleries, and we reached over 750,000 online visitors — a record-breaking number — with our web-based educational services for teachers, students, and families.

It was a pleasure this year to welcome new staff members, who brought us their energy and fresh ideas. Sue Geshwender became Volunteer Programs Associate in September 2011. Moriah Grooms-Garcia joined us in February 2012 as Education Programs Associate, the position held previously by Kathryn (Kat) Silverstein. While Kat is no longer with us, her development of creative new program initiatives is described in the pages that follow.

Each year since my arrival to head the Oriental Institute’s Public Education Department in 1992, I have had the opportunity to write an annual report describing the department’s successes, along with its occasional challenges, as we developed programming to bring the ancient world and the work of the Oriental Institute to life for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. By the time this year’s report is published, I will have retired as Head of Public Education and the department will have welcomed a new leader. So this year I have asked Education staff to share their own thoughts about their specific areas of concentration. Wendy Ennes, Associate Head of Education, joined by Kathryn Grossman, graduate student content advisor, will tell you about groundbreaking online initiatives. Moriah Grooms-Garcia, Education Programs Associate, will describe the successes of the Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center (KADC) and the



Figure 1. Laura D’Alessandro, Head of Conservation, points out a trace of original pigment on a Khorsabad relief during the program *From Ground to Gallery: The Secret Life of Museum Objects*. Photo by Carole Krucoff

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related programs that she, Kat Silverstein, and graduate student content advisor Megaera Lorenz, have developed. Education Outreach Specialists Cathy Dueñas and Terry Friedman, assisted by Sue Geshwender, will portray a year filled with new and meaningful initiatives for our docents and volunteers. All these new ventures have benefitted from the invaluable guidance and support of Public Education's Faculty Working Group. Its members are Fred Donner, Professor of Near Eastern history, Chairman; Jack Green, Oriental Institute Museum Chief Curator; Donald Whitcomb, Research Associate (Assistant Professor) of Islamic archaeology; and Christopher Woods, Associate Professor of Sumerian.

My role for this report is to describe the adult education and youth and family projects that have been my particular areas of concentration this year, and then offer some reflections as I look back on the past twenty years of public programming at the Oriental Institute.

## Adult Education

Presenting rich and meaningful adult education programming to serve longtime friends and attract new audiences has always been central to the mission of the Public Education Department. This past year we partnered with faculty, graduate students, Museum staff, and community organizations to develop a broad range of courses and events inspired by the Museum's special exhibits and Oriental Institute research.

### Courses

Most of our on-campus adult education courses are offered by Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations graduate students in collaboration with the University of Chicago's Graham School of General Studies. This year, our joint multi-session courses included:

- Ancient Egyptian Religion, taught by Jonathan Winnerman
- Beyond the Stereotypes: The Persian Empire Revealed, taught by Tytus Mikołajczak
- Elam: Iran's Oldest Civilization, taught by Tobin Hartnell

While multi-session adult education courses such as these have long been a popular option at the Oriental Institute, recent years have seen a drop in enrollment, with many members and friends telling us they no longer have the time to commit to class sessions that take place over several weeks. With that in mind, this year we developed *From Ground to Gallery: The Secret Life of Museum Objects*, a special four-session series with each session focused on the fascinating living history — from ancient times to the present — of a selected object in the Museum's collection.

The brainchild of Megaera Lorenz, a graduate student content advisor for Public Education, the *Ground to Gallery* series enabled participants to sign up for as many sessions as would fit their schedule. The sessions included:

- The Lamassu and the Khorsabad Reliefs, presented by Jack Green, Chief Curator, and Laura D'Alessandro, Head of the Conservation Laboratory (fig. 2)
- The Persepolis Fortification Archives, presented by Matthew Stolper, John A. Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies and Director of the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project; Miller Prosser, Research Project Professional; and graduate student Tytus Mikołajczak

- The Dead Sea Scrolls, presented by Norman Golb, Ludwig Rosenberger Professor of Jewish History and Civilization, and Eric Jobe, PhD candidate in Northwest Semitic philology
- Ancient Egyptian Fakes and Forgeries, presented by Helen McDonald, Registrar, and Megaera Lorenz, PhD candidate in Egyptology

The popularity of this series, whose sessions sold out almost as soon as they were announced, gave us a new model to meet the changing needs and interests of our adult education audience.

Our correspondence courses are another way to provide adult education — particularly for far-flung members and friends, or those who for other reasons cannot commit to attending courses on campus. This past year, Hieroglyphs by Mail, taught by Andrew Baumann and Vanessa Davies, and Cuneiform by Mail, taught by Monica Phillips and Seunghee Yie, attracted ninety-seven participants whose locations ranged from New York to California, and from Norway to Chile. Distance-learning courses featuring the best practices in online education are an exciting new departmental initiative that Wendy Ennes describes in her section of this report.



Figure 2. Chief Curator Jack Green shares “behind-the-scenes” information about the Museum’s collection during the program *From Ground to Gallery: The Secret Life of Museum Objects*. Photo by Carole Krucoff

### **Special Adult Education Events**

In addition to formal courses, we offered a wide variety of single-session adult education events throughout the year. Many highlighted the Museum’s special exhibits and featured presentations by faculty, Museum staff, students, and guest speakers.

In the summer and fall we offered five public programs led by Emily Teeter in conjunction with the special exhibit *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*. Emily, who curated this special exhibit, offered two lunchtime tours of *Before the Pyramids*, each attracting many visitors from across the campus and Hyde Park. We also partnered with two Hyde Park cultural institutions on unique programs that introduced us to new audiences. Robie House, the Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece that is our neighbor on campus, invited us to join their After Hours evening program. This wine-and-hors d’oeuvres reception included informal tours of Robie House and also a lecture on *Before the Pyramids* by Emily. Then all the guests joined Emily at the Oriental Institute for a private, after-hours tour of the exhibit. Participants included many Robie House members as well as Chicago newcomers who had never visited the Oriental Institute.

We also partnered with the Hyde Park Art Center on *Cocktails and Clay: Ancient Egyptian Style*, an evening event that introduced us to a new, young adult audience. A regular feature at the Art Center, *Cocktails and Clay* invites guests to try their hand at ceramic-art making. At this version of the event, Emily Teeter brought images of ancient Egyptian ceramics and

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Figure 3. Emily Teeter, far right, points out decorative details on ancient Egyptian pottery as participants make sketches during the program *Decorating Ancient-Style Ceramics*.



Figure 4. (left) This participant was inspired to paint a ceramic piece with motifs from ancient Iran during *Decorating Ancient-Style Ceramics*. Photos by Carole Krucoff

a reproduction of a vessel on view in *Before the Pyramids* for a presentation that gave guests examples to use in the clay sessions.

As a follow-up to *Cocktails and Clay*, we offered *Decorating Ancient-Style Ceramics*, a hands-on workshop at the Oriental Institute. Guests toured the galleries with Emily to learn about and sketch the exquisitely decorated ceramic art on exhibit (fig. 3) and then joined teaching artist Aurora Tabor to decorate their own version of a pre-fired ancient-style pot. One of the beautiful outcomes of their work is pictured in figure 4.

The special exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East* inspired several programs. A highlight was the public symposium developed with our museum colleagues to explore the many ways archaeological sites and artifacts have been documented by paintings, models, photographs, and the latest high-tech visualizations. Breasted Hall was filled to near capacity as presenters examined the ways these images are produced and the impact they can have on our understanding — or misunderstanding — of the ancient Middle East.

The *Picturing the Past* symposium featured speakers from the Oriental Institute as well as guest lecturers, who all fielded numerous questions from the audience during a lively panel discussion after the individual presentations. Speakers from the Oriental Institute included:

- Jack Green, Chief Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum and Co-Curator of *Picturing the Past*
- Emily Teeter, Special Exhibits Coordinator and exhibit Co-Curator.

Guest speakers included:

- Eric Carlson, archaeologist and archaeological illustrator
- Donald H. Sanders, President of the Institute for the Visualization of History

- Michael J. Seymour, Research Associate in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and former Project Curator in the Department of the Middle East, British Museum (fig. 5)

Picturing the Past also inspired two special film series with screenings accompanied by discussion sessions with scholars. “Virtual Iran” presented three documentaries by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Farzin Rezaeian, who uses cutting-edge technologies to showcase the art and archaeology of Iran. Tobin Hartnell, graduate of the University’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, led a discussion after each screening and then invited everyone to see how clips from the films were integrated into the Picturing the Past exhibit.

“Hollywood Pictures the Past” let us explore a topic not covered in the special exhibit — how movies have influenced our views about the ancient world. Morag Kersel, Oriental Institute Research Associate and Assistant Professor of anthropology at DePaul University, led discussions on how some directors and producers designed their films purely as entertainment, while others turned to historical and literary sources in an effort to convey the complexity of life in ancient times. The films in this series included:

- *The Ten Commandments* (1923) Cecil B. DeMille’s lavish silent film masterpiece
- *The Egyptian* (1954) A classic of the “sword and sandal” era (fig. 6)
- *Troy* (2004) a blockbuster depiction of the Trojan War, loosely based on the Iliad

Curator-led tours are always well received by our visitors. Each of the three co-curators of Picturing the Past offered public tours of the exhibit this past year. Emily Teeter gave an introductory tour, Jack Green gave a unique guided look at the exhibit’s behind-the-scenes development, and John Larson, Oriental Institute Mu-



Figure 5. Michael J. Seymour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a guest presenter for the Picturing the Past symposium, discusses a widely recognized, but utterly incorrect, image of the ziggurat at Babylon, a structure often considered the basis for the biblical account of the Tower of Babel. Photo by Wendy Ennes

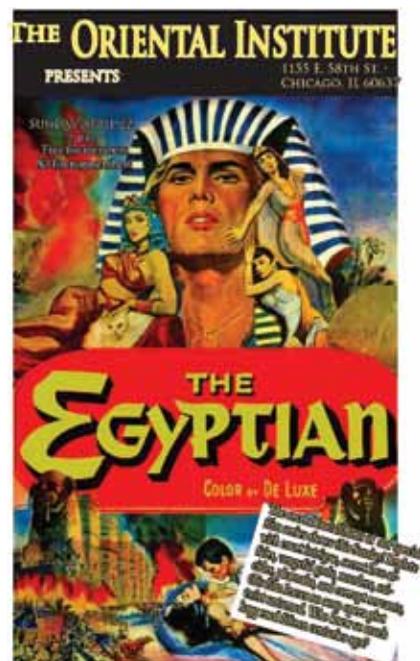


Figure 6. Poster for the showing of the sword-and-sandal classic *The Egyptian* during the “Hollywood Pictures the Past” film series. Design by Augusta Gudeman

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Figure 7. François Gaudard points out an image of ancient Egyptians harvesting grapes to use in wine-making for the *Uncorking the Past* tour and wine-tasting program. Photo by Carole Krucoff

seum Archivist, shared his expertise on the role photography has played in recording archaeological expeditions and discoveries.

Other special programs also attracted new audiences. *Uncorking the Past*, a museum tour and wine reception, highlighted ancient wine-making, drinking practices, and the cultural significance of alcoholic beverages in the ancient Middle East. Led by François Gaudard, Egyptologist and Oriental Institute Research Associate, and Tate Paulette, PhD candidate in ancient Near Eastern art and archaeology, the tour portion of the program featured the many objects on view that relate to wine making and drinking (fig. 7). This event, which included a tasting of contemporary Middle Eastern wines, received city-wide publicity and attracted a sold-out crowd of visitors, many of whom had never before come to the Oriental Institute. Most told us this kind of single-session program, which combines a rich learning experience with a social gathering, is just the kind of activity they are seeking as an introduction to a cultural institution.

Hosting jazz concerts as part of the Hyde Park Jazz Festival continues to draw our largest audi-

ence of new visitors. This year, Breasted Hall was filled to overflowing as vocal stylist Sarah Marie Young, backed by the Tom Fitzgerald Quartet, thrilled the crowd with her stellar jazz abilities, sassy personality, and sparkling showmanship (fig. 8). Long lines also filled the building as jazz fans awaited seating in the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery for two performances presented by the Tomeka Reid trio. An increasingly acclaimed figure on the Chicago jazz scene, cellist Reid, joined by bassist Josh Abrams and guitarist Matt Schneider, filled the Persian Gallery's magnificent setting with luminous sounds that merged jazz, classical, and experimental music. All told, our Jazz Festival concerts attracted more than 600 visitors, many of whom had never been to the Oriental Institute. Most asked to be signed up for the *E-Tablet* and are now regularly receiving event and membership information.

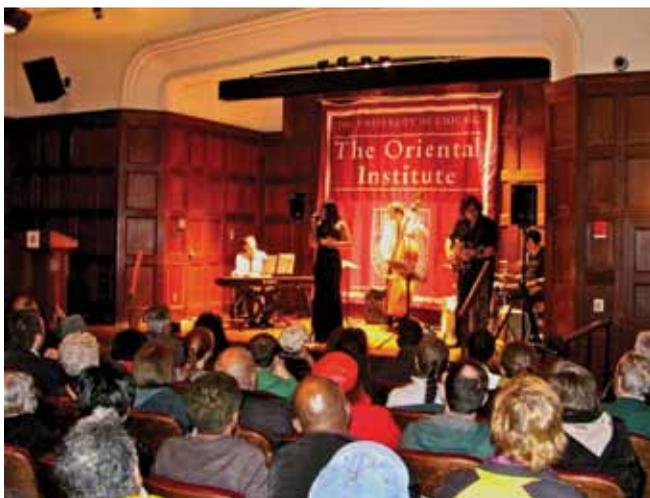


Figure 8. Vocal stylist Sarah Marie Young, backed by the Tom Fitzgerald Quartet, filled Breasted Hall to overflowing during her Hyde Park Jazz Festival concert at the Oriental Institute. Photo by Carole Krucoff

## Outreach and Partnerships with the University Community

Collaboration with departments and organizations on campus to serve the University and the wider community remained important for us this year. We offered special docent-led tours featuring the *Before the Pyramids* special exhibit during the University's Humanities Day in the fall. These tours filled to capacity with many visitors who were new to the Institute. During alumni weekend in June we offered tours and special hands-on programming for families, along with the opportunity to join in a simulated excavation in the KADC. However, outreach to the University's student community took center stage for us this year.

During orientation week in September, we joined with the Membership Department to take part in campus-wide student resource fairs, where we informed new arrivals of our free student membership program. We also offered a museum tour and reception that attracted eighty new freshmen. These outreach efforts brought us many new student members, who continued their relationship with the Oriental Institute throughout the year during special Membership events arranged for both new and returning student members. Membership and Education agree that the student membership program is key to building on-campus awareness and making the Oriental Institute integral to student life.

Providing opportunities for students to have an in-depth internship experience at the Oriental Institute was also a high priority. Over the past several years we have partnered with Morris Fred of the University of Chicago's Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS) to provide students with a "laboratory" to experience the many ways the Institute and its Museum serve both the academic and wider community. This year eight MAPSS interns joined us, some working for the Museum Archives, Registration, or doing marketing research; their contributions will be described in the *Museum* section of this annual report.

Public Education could not have managed without the invaluable support of MAPSS interns Kyle Fashel, KADC Facilitor; Corey McGee, Education Programs Assistant; and Jane Messah-Ericksen and Margaret Schillington, who worked alongside Wendy Ennes on the content editing as well as the technological aspects for new online courses. In addition, some graduates from the previous year's MAPSS program stayed on to continue contributing their time and talents as interns. These included KADC Facilitor Matthew Nunnelley, Abigail Abisinito, who focused on marketing, and Huiying Chen, whose database skills, organizational abilities, and programmatic insights benefitted both Education and the Museum. Chen served as a program presenter and evaluator. She also began the Museum's process of translating special exhibit labels into Chinese for the growing tourist audience, and she helped with research on ways museums of all disciplines serve those who have low vision or are blind, an initiative that Public Education is exploring as an important outreach venture.



Figure 9. Staff and several of our many invaluable interns take a break to smile for the camera during a planning session for new programs. Seated left: Megaera Lorenz, graduate student content advisor. Seated right: Intern Kendra Grimmert. Standing, left to right: Kat Silverstein, former Education Programs Associate, and interns Allison Hegel, Susan Jones, and Huiying Chen. Photo by Carole Krucoff

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Interns beyond the MAPSS program also deserve special mention. Augusta Gudeman, a University of Chicago undergraduate in anthropology, used her writing and design skills to become our public relations expert. Allison Hegel, a University of Chicago Metcalf Scholarship intern, assisted Wendy with the ACCESS teacher professional development project that is described in the following pages. Kendra Grimmett, recent University of Chicago graduate in art history, who had previously interned as KADC facilitator, stayed on to lend her insights and expertise for new program development (fig. 9). Contributions to the Volunteer Program by interns Arparupa Chakravarti, Susan Jones, and Erin Minnaugh will appear in the *Volunteer Program* section.

## Youth and Family Programs

Public Education offered long-time favorite programs as well as a new initiative for youth and families this year. Outreach formats helped us reach new audiences. Programs at the Museum enabled us to serve old friends and attract new visitors.

### *Outreach Programs*

Reorganization and structural change in the administration of the city of Chicago's cultural programming this past year brought about an hiatus in the myriad of opportunities that had enabled us, and other museums, to interact with hundreds, even thousands, of parents and children city wide. The department is working on ways to collaborate once more with the city, but in the meantime we focused this year on two highly successful outreach programs with local partners.

The 57th Street Children's Book Fair has been an annual Hyde Park celebration of books and reading since its start twenty-six years ago. The Oriental Institute has the distinction of being the only community institution that has taken part in the fair since it began. This year, our Book Fair booth was surrounded by parents and children eager to make ancient Egyptian-style scrolls, learn about scribes and hieroglyphic script, and stamp hieroglyphs onto papyrus strips to make their own bookmarks (fig. 10). As in the past, the Book Fair let us introduce the Oriental Institute to both local and citywide families at this fall event.

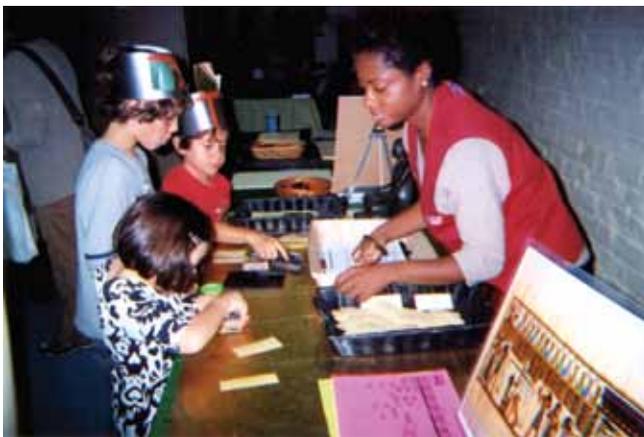


Figure 10. Volunteer Erica Griffin helps children at the Oriental Institute booth make a papyrus bookmark during the 57th Street Children's Book Fair. Photo by Carole Krucoff

In the spring, we partnered with the National Museum of Mexican Art for *Día del Niño*, an annual event that attracts thousands of families from the Latino community. This program enables us to share information about all the bilingual services now available at the Oriental Institute. These include English/Spanish museum activity cards and interactive computer kiosks, audio tours for children and adults, special exhibit labels in Spanish, and an *Información en Español* page on the Institute's website. During *Día del Niño* more than 1,000 parents and children

lined up at our table to make ancient-Egyptian style crowns and necklaces, and receive samples of our bilingual materials as well as directions to the Oriental Institute (fig. 11). This is our fourth year at the event, and each time we encounter more families who have heard of the Institute, some telling us that they have seen the bilingual posters and materials we have sent to all of Chicago's public libraries. As encouragement to visit the Museum we provided everyone who stopped by our table with a coupon to redeem at the Suq for a free museum audio tour. This will allow the department to track attendance inspired by *Día del Niño*.

### At the Museum

Mummies took center stage at the Museum in October, when more than 250 parents and children joined us for Mummies Night, our pre-Halloween celebration that has become a Hyde Park tradition. Docents, interns, and staff joined together to present a “tomb-full” of favorite activities ranging from getting up close and personal with a reproduction mummy to dressing up in costumes from “King Tut's Closet,” and from folding origami pyramids, to joining in the “Guess the Mummy Lollipops” contest. New activities included face painting, creating spooky spiders, and decoding a secret message from the mummy Meresamun (fig. 12). A good time was had by all!

Our reproduction mummy, affectionately named Jesser-hotep, reappeared to play a starring role in “The Secret of the Mummies,” a special activity for families developed as part of the Volunteer Program's new thematic tour initiative spearheaded by Sue Geshwender. On select Sunday afternoons, visitors can take a hands-on role in a recreated mummification process, enjoy a tour featuring the mummies in our Egyptian Gallery, and then view *Mummies Made in Egypt*, the award-winning children's film from the Reading Rainbow series.

Along with special programs for parents and children, every day is family day at the Oriental Institute. Our interactive computers are regularly in use (fig. 13) and this past year over 9,000 of our full-color Family Activity Cards, which can be found in nearly every gallery, were taken home by museum visitors.



Figure 11. An exhausted but happy crew sit behind an empty table after more than 1,000 visitors used up nearly all our supplies during the *Día del Niño* event. Seated left to right: Interns Augusta Gudeman and Corey McGee, and Catherine Dueñas, Volunteer Coordinator. Standing left to right: docents Semra Prescott and Gabriele DaSilva. Photo by Carole Krucoff



Figure 12. Dressed in ancient Egyptian-style costume, docents Rebecca Binkley-Albright and Stephen Ritzel help visitors decode a secret hieroglyphic message during *Mummy's Night*. Photo by Wendy Ennes

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## A Look Back and a Look to the Future

Looking back over the history of the past twenty years, I am reminded of the many people who have made the achievements of the Education Department possible. I would like to thank my predecessor Joan Barghusen for the strong foundation she laid to ensure that public education would grow and thrive at the Oriental Institute. My gratitude to Gil Stein and Steve Camp, who guide, support, and honor the work of Public Education. The department truly appreciates your generosity and your belief in us.

Heartfelt thanks to Karen Wilson, former Museum director, who hired me, and then gave her full support to new ventures, as did Geoff Emberling when he arrived to lead the Museum, and as do Jack Green and Emily Teeter today.

A special thank-you to Oriental Institute faculty, staff, and students — many mentioned in this report — who have always willingly shared their time and expertise. While it is not possible to mention by name everyone who has supported us over time, I am grateful to you all for helping to make the work of Public Education rewarding and professionally fulfilling.

Finally, thank-you to the Public Education staff, my colleagues and friends; Wendy Ennes, Associate Head of Public Education, who has continually motivated us with her brilliance, vision, and drive; Moriah Grooms-Garcia, newest on staff, who has mastered so beautifully all aspects of her position as Education Programs Associate that it feels as if she has always been with us. Sue Geshwender, Volunteer Program Associate, who has revitalized us all with her fresh outlook on data management and tour techniques. The dedication, generosity, and creativity of Cathy Dueñas and Terry Friedman, Education Outreach Specialists, have made them role models and sources of inspiration for their colleagues and all of our volunteers. There are no words to express how grateful I am for what Public Education's staff and volunteers do for the Institute, the University, and the many communities we strive to serve. This past

year the volunteers who contributed their gifts of time and talent to special public events and programs included: Michael Begun, Christel Betz, Rebecca Binkley-Albright, Grace Brody, Gabriella Cohen, D'Ann Condes, Gabriele DaSilva, Margaret Foorman, Dario Giacomoni, Erica Griffin, Stuart Kleven, Marilyn Murray, Kathy Minneck, Demetria Nanos, Semra Prescott, Stephen Ritzel, Deloris Sanders, Mae Simon, Dee Spiech, Mari Terman, Robert Threate, Carole Yoshida, and Agnes Zellner.

I would like to end by saying that the work of an education department, whether in a museum or a cultural institution such as ours, sometimes seems so much more ephemeral than an exhibit, or a book, or a body of research. But the outcomes of such programs as a symposium or a course that makes meaningful connections between ancient and contemporary times, or the presentation of a teachers' program that transforms an educator's classroom practice, or the opportunity for a child touring the museum to discover what it might be like to make a significant archaeological discovery — these are as lasting as any other educational experience a cultural institution can provide, and they



Figure 13. A father and his children are intently engaged with the interactives on our museum gallery computer kiosks. Photo by Wendy Ennes

are what can form a bond between that visitor and the institution. I truly appreciate the opportunity to have led a department filled with masters of such educational programming. Read on to experience the quality of their work and their dedication to it in the reports they have provided. These will show that the department is ready to forge ahead with exciting, innovative, and lasting ways to share the history, written traditions, and art of the ancient Middle East with ever more wide-ranging and diverse audiences. Stay tuned!

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## Public Education Initiative: Developing the Virtual Classroom

Wendy Ennes

As University of Chicago graduate students move toward the completion of their doctoral studies they benefit from opportunities to develop and practice their own approach to teaching within the context of the university setting. To that end, for thirty years, the Oriental Institute's Public Education Department has offered enriched graduate-level teaching opportunities and experiences to students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Teaching an adult education course offers every nascent professor the opportunity to hone their craft, develop a unique intellectual presentation style, and provides a responsive adult audience who appreciates our research and fresh approaches to scholarly content.

Since the Internet and computer technologies continue to advance the ways we communicate with one another and share information, we have witnessed our attendance slowly drop off for our traditional multi-session, on-campus adult education courses. Fewer people have the time to commit to a six- or eight-session course that requires them to commute to the University for class sessions. In keeping with these times, Public Education embarked on the exciting journey of delivering Oriental Institute content and research using the Internet.

The Oriental Institute has always been at the forefront of innovation in its research as well as its educational outreach to our public audiences. In 1996, when the Internet was still in its infancy, the Public Education Department announced its first online course, *An Introduction to Ancient Egypt*. Taught by Peter Piccione, then a graduate student and now Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Charleston, South Carolina, the course was offered twice and both sessions filled to capacity. That same year, this online venture — a first for the Oriental Institute and the University of Chicago — was acknowledged as a major education innovation by the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Over the next several years, the Public Education Department offered online courses on a variety of topics. While they did not employ the sophisticated online learning management systems available today, these courses used the functionality of the Internet to great advantage and paved the way for things to come.

In 2003, the Public Education Department won a National Leadership grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support the creation of the national online resource *Ancient Mesopotamia: This History, Our History*. Aside from developing the Institute's first publicly accessible database of artifacts from the Oriental Institute Museum and the creation of learning interactives for K-12 students, a portion of the same federal

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support went toward the development, completion, and offering of an online course about ancient Mesopotamian history. Intended to expose K–12 educators to sound academic scholarship about ancient Mesopotamia, the Public Education Department collaborated with the Graham School in 2007, 2008, and 2009 to offer the course as a graduate credit opportunity for K–12 teachers across the country. When it became clear that the cost of University of Chicago graduate credit was unsustainable for this audience, we made the decision in 2010 to refocus the course and offer it as a new adult education opportunity.

In 2011, the stars finally aligned for this important Public Education initiative to truly take off. As the first University of Chicago unit to offer an online course to the public using Chalk, once again the Oriental Institute was at the forefront of innovation. The Chalk team implemented a major upgrade of the Chalk Learning Management System software to a much more user-friendly version of Blackboard. We partnered with the University’s Information Technology Services team to find database workarounds to manually register and provide CNET ids and access to Chalk for all of our adult continuing-education clients. Finally, and most importantly, we invited Public Education’s graduate student content advisor, Kathryn Grossman, to write and develop the content for a new adult education online course entitled *The Dawn of History: Society and Culture in Ancient Mesopotamia* (fig. 14). Christopher Woods, Assistant Professor of Sumerology, and Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein both contributed to reviewing and editing Kathryn’s content.

The development process to produce an excellent online course experience for any learner should adhere to best industry practices. It somewhat follows the same process as the development of a major website containing numerous web pages. Written content is “chunked” for easy reading over the Internet and supplemented by copyright-approved

Figure 14. Beginning with the Orientation, course participants are first guided through the online course interface, then onto the Introduction to Course Content

or copyright-free images, videos, audio recordings, and academic readings. All content is housed within the Chalk environment. Participants are provided with clear instructional and navigational pathways through an Orientation to the web interface, an introductory discussion board exercise called an “icebreaker,” course expectations, and then on to learning the scholarly content. Since everyone learns differently — some people are auditory learners, some are visual, some learn by doing, and some absorb information by reading — it is important to provide a wide range of ways and resources for these audiences to engage with our online content. And, since many of our learners are also retirees, some of whom have limited technical expertise navigating the Internet and using different software and plug-ins, it is especially important to provide trouble-free technological inroads to online course content as well as 24/7 technical support.

The discussion board is the life-blood of any distance learning activity that employs best practices. Timing and pacing a course to encourage asynchronous learning and a sense of community among participants that are scattered across countries and continents can be tricky. An asynchronous course means that students, teachers, and facilitators can log in and out of the course environment and engage with the course content according to their own personal schedules. To foster that critical sense of community for Kathryn’s inaugural Chalk course we provided deadlines and guidelines in tandem with readings, links, and imagery that were tied in with engaging assessment strategies as well as participatory incentives, such as grading and journaling.

On January 16, 2012, Kathryn Grossman’s eight-week online course, *The Dawn of History: Society and Culture in Ancient Mesopotamia*, was launched. It was filled to capacity with twenty-five passionate, adult twenty-first century learners from across the United States, Canada, and Brazil. With the resounding success of this online course Public Education’s future plans include developing more online courses so that we can continue to meet the needs and interests of the large world-wide population of retiring baby boomers around the world who embrace learning. We are also in the process of developing a training program for NELC graduate students who should learn best practices before undertaking teaching online. Now, please enjoy following Kathryn’s story below as she experienced teaching online for the first time!

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## Teaching in the Virtual Classroom

**Kathryn Grossman**

The Dawn of History: Society and Culture in Ancient Mesopotamia was a very different — and incredibly rewarding — teaching experience. Most Oriental Institute adult education courses are lectures, augmented with outside readings and in-class discussions; this course, however, was hosted entirely on the web, allowing students from around the world to participate. Most courses have a regular weekly meeting time on campus or at the Gleacher Center downtown; this course was asynchronous, meaning that course materials were available around the clock and that all interactions between the students and the instructor would take place as posts and responses hosted on the course website. Instead of listening to a traditional

The screenshot shows the Chalk course interface for 'GIC Fall (2) The Dawn of History: Society and Culture in Ancient Mesopotamia'. The main content area is titled 'SCRIBES AND LITERACY' and is page 13 of 26. It contains a paragraph of text about Mesopotamian literacy and a video player. The video is titled 'Scribes in Mesopotamia' and shows a man with glasses speaking in front of a bookshelf. The video player includes a progress bar and a 'Player Controls' button. The interface also features a navigation menu on the left and a table of contents on the right.

Figure 15. Embedded videos enhance learning within the Chalk course interface

lecture, students had access each week to a new “module.” Each module included a weekly reading, richly illustrated with web links and audio, video, and image files (fig. 15). Modules also contained a glossary of terms, a map of sites mentioned in the reading, a short quiz, a private journaling task, and a discussion assignment, all organized around a common theme.

Of all these components, it was the students’ avid participation in the discussion board that became the focal point of the course. Each week, students were asked to engage with the module’s theme by examining images of artifacts, reading scholarly articles, or watching videos of lectures and then answering a series of questions in the discussion board forum. Although the discussion board assignment was usually due six days after it was posted on the website, responses to the assignment often began appearing less than twelve hours after it had been posted! A typical week saw the twenty-five students in the course writing upwards of 150 posts — long, thoughtful, and often beautifully composed answers to the complex questions posed — as well as comments on other students’ posts. In fact, the time-stamps showed students posting on the discussion board at all hours of the day and night! My role in these discussions was to keep the points relevant to the module, make sure everyone’s voice was heard, correct mistakes, answer the questions that inevitably arose, and, at the end of the week, tie it all together with thoughts on the week’s discussion. Despite the lack of a physical classroom setting, the interaction with the students was, through the back-and-forth of the discussion board, far more intense than in traditional lecture-style courses.

These extensive online conversations — and the asynchronous nature of the course — gave the students a much more personal educational experience. For example, students who might not otherwise speak up in a traditional classroom setting were more comfortable contributing to the online discussions. At the same time, students with prior knowledge of aspects of Near Eastern history and culture were able to add their own experiences to the

group conversation, expanding the scope and range of the topics that we addressed. In addition, students with busy schedules were able to join in at times that suited their lifestyle, a flexibility that encouraged them to participate more fully than set meeting times might allow.

The course was a huge success from the opening of the registration period (which saw it quickly over-subscribed) to the “post-course discussion board” (a forum requested by students who wanted to continue their conversations following the eight-week class). Most course participants logged in at least once a day to check on the progress of a discussion, to add their voice, and to read through the modules. The suggestions and comments that the students submitted weekly in their private online journals were overwhelmingly positive and constructive. And, finally, a survey that students filled out during the last week of the course showed that they were overwhelmingly pleased with the Dawn of History and wanted more online course offerings from the Oriental Institute’s Public Education Department.

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## The ArcGIS Common Core Education for Sixth Grade Students Project (ACCESS)

Wendy Ennes

Given the recent turmoil and restructuring underway in the Chicago Public Schools, much was accomplished for the ArcGIS Common Core Education for Sixth Grade Students Project (ACCESS), which began in late summer 2010. Generously funded by the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, the ACCESS project was designed by Scott Branting, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL), and Wendy Ennes, Associate Head of Public Education, in partnership with Martin Moe, Manager of Social Studies and Dr. John Loehr, the past Director of STEM Education for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The goal of the project is to provide enriched educational opportunities for underserved Chicago Public School students by providing their teachers with new ways to present diverse types of spatial, tabular, and textual data in ways that can engage students who possess a wide variety of learning styles and needs. Because many Chicago Public School students struggle to work with data, form hypotheses, and understand the conceptual connections between cause and effect and since spatial reasoning and the use of spatial technologies are increasingly important in today’s world, there is a need for innovative and easily accessed tools to help educators teach these skills. ArcGIS, which is a suite of industry-standard Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software products, allows users to view, query, manipulate, and edit maps and other sorts of spatial data. The ACCESS project’s focus on ArcGIS for professional development and curriculum creation has enormous potential to assist educators in helping their students to develop vital spatial reasoning, data analysis and critical thinking skills.

The goals of the ACCESS project are to:

1. *Teach* a core group of three top-notch three-person teacher teams (a total of nine teachers, with each team comprised of a social studies, science, and technology teacher) from three underserved CPS schools how to use ArcGIS
2. *Work* with the three-teacher teams to *brainstorm* new curriculum ideas based upon what they learned in the ArcGIS workshops and to have them identify, using evalua-

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tion techniques and tools, six curriculum-related modules that support CPS middle-school curriculum needs and teaching goals.

3. *Produce* six modules in keeping with the curricular goals of the teacher teams
4. *Test* those six modules in the three teacher-team schools
5. And finally, at the end of Year Two, to *provide system-wide distribution of those modules* to all CPS teachers via CPS's online professional development vehicle, Safari Montage.

During this fiscal year, Wendy Ennes, with the help of Metcalf Scholarship intern Allison Hegel, successfully rewrote and redesigned eleven comprehensive ArcGIS teacher-training labs based on the materials used by CAMEL courses for University of Chicago Students. All the labs were revamped with new images, icons, and instructional text (fig. 16). Wendy also worked closely with evaluation specialist Dr. Jonathan Margolin of the American Institutes for Research to create an evaluation crosswalk template, a logic model of the ACCESS pro-

Lab 3: Remote Sensing & Georectification

Introduction

In this lab, we will use ArcGIS to take images, such as scans of paper maps or **Remote Sensing Images**, and link them to a traditional coordinate system. This process is called **georectification**. Once we have georectified our maps and images, we will be able to superimpose them on top of one another.

**Remote Sensing Images** are the results of mechanisms that capture pictures of the land's surface from a distance, such as photos taken from a satellite. You can get these images from Google Maps or Google Earth. In our labs you'll notice we've used additional sources, such as MODIS, ASTER and CORONA. These are just different types of satellite images. At the end of this lab we've provided a guide to these different formats and links to find these images for free online.

Georectification, a.k.a. georeferencing, means creating reference points to tie our image to ArcMap's coordinate system.

Exercise 1: Georectifying Remote Sensing Images

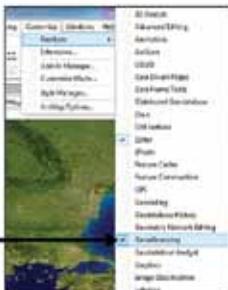
Objectives

- Tie images to ArcMap's coordinate system
- Manipulate existing and imported maps

*Preparing to Georectify an Image*

1. Open ArcMap. Choose 'New' from the file menu and select 'Blank Map'. Add **Turkey\_clip.tif** using the Add data icon on the Tools bar.
 

If prompted to build pyramids for the image, click YES.
2. Switch from Layout to Data view.
3. Under the Customize menu, select **Toolbars**, and then select **Georeferencing**. This toolbar is what you will use to georectify your images by creating corresponding links between the rectified and unrectified datasets.



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Figure 16. Redesigned ArcGIS training labs facilitate the ACCESS teacher professional development program

gram that details inputs and outcomes of the project, a pre-training evaluation tool before embarking on the ArcGIS training and a post-training evaluation tool to collect ideas and feedback from educators.

Despite our progress, this fiscal year was a challenging one for the ACCESS project. The largest challenge was scheduling the professional development training for the nine educators during July 2012. Despite the Chicago Public Schools being on the brink of a teacher strike, we were successful in finding five schools that were interested in participating in the project but were unable to reach a consensus as to a suitable date for attending the two week-long ArcGIS training. Once events in Chicago Public Schools have settled down, with continued support from the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, we are hopeful that this upcoming school year will prove to be more successful.

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## The Development of the Front End for the Museum Collections and Research Archives Database

Wendy Ennes

Getting the Oriental Institute's collections database up and running has been a major institutional initiative for the past several years. Developing the web front end, the graphical user interface (GUI), and the search features and functions for a framework that will house all data and serve our various audiences — faculty, scholars, research associates, volunteers, the public, and staff — is but one facet in the very long and involved process of digitizing our collections. With support of a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a team comprised of many people throughout the Oriental Institute and beyond worked hard this fiscal year to make the development of a web front-end a reality for museum collections and the Research Archives catalog data.

With invaluable assistance from Project Manager Angela Spinazze, Project Director Scott Branting, Integrated Database Team Member John Sanders (for more information about this project, please see the *Computer Laboratory* section), Evaluator Julia Brazas, Web Designers Steven Lane and Dora Fraeman, and Programmer Alan Takaoka, Wendy Ennes ran three separate evaluation sessions with three very different types of user groups to tease out Internet and research use patterns. Our user groups were shown a number of live museum websites from around the world including the very popular Ashmolean Museum website. Each user group was asked a series of questions designed to ignite discussion and tease out the various ways people prefer to conduct searches, see information arranged on a web page, and access imagery related to collections and libraries. Our goal was to incorporate these multiple requests of what our audience needs from a user-friendly web front-end when they access the Museum's collection or the Research Archives catalog online. An effective web front-end sets the tone of our institutional outreach to all our users and it will also provide ease of use for all who come to see the Oriental Institute's collections online.

The three evaluation sessions were conducted in October 2011. During each evaluation session we listened carefully to every user and discussed a wide range of possibilities for the look, feel, and functionality of Internet access to our collections. Once all user responses were

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collected, we consolidated this important feedback and shared it with Web Designers Steven Lane and Dora Fraeman. Steven and Dora then collaborated to develop several wire-frames that illustrate specific search and results functionalities (fig. 17).

The first evaluation session included scholars, researchers, and Oriental Institute faculty. Special thanks to Nadine Moeller, Yorke Rowan, Michael Fisher, Kathryn Grossman, Petra Goedegebuure, Andrew Dix, and Karen Wilson for their invaluable insights. A second evaluation was then conducted with a distinguished group of docents, volunteers, and donors. Special thanks to George Sundell, Andrea Dudek, Sue Geshwender, Terry Friedman, Susan Bazargan, and Margaret Foorman for their clever ideas and suggestions. The third group to provide feedback was a group of K–12 teachers from suburban and Chicago Public Schools. The Oriental Institute’s Public Education Department is indebted to the service provided by educators Monica Swope, Jeff Sadoff, Mary Cobb, Maryhelen Matijevic, Janene Maclin, and Lindsay Johnson for reminding us to consider the needs of K–12 teachers and students when they come to the Oriental Institute website to access curriculum-related aspects of the Oriental Institute’s collection.

In December 2011, Wendy conducted a final use case study with Oriental Institute researchers and graduate students to finalize our understanding of online research practices. Many thanks go to Nadine Moeller, Kathryn Grossman, Arne Wossink, and Andrew Dix for giving their support to the Oriental Institute’s integrated database project. Since so much comprehensive evaluation work was conducted in the earliest stages of development for the

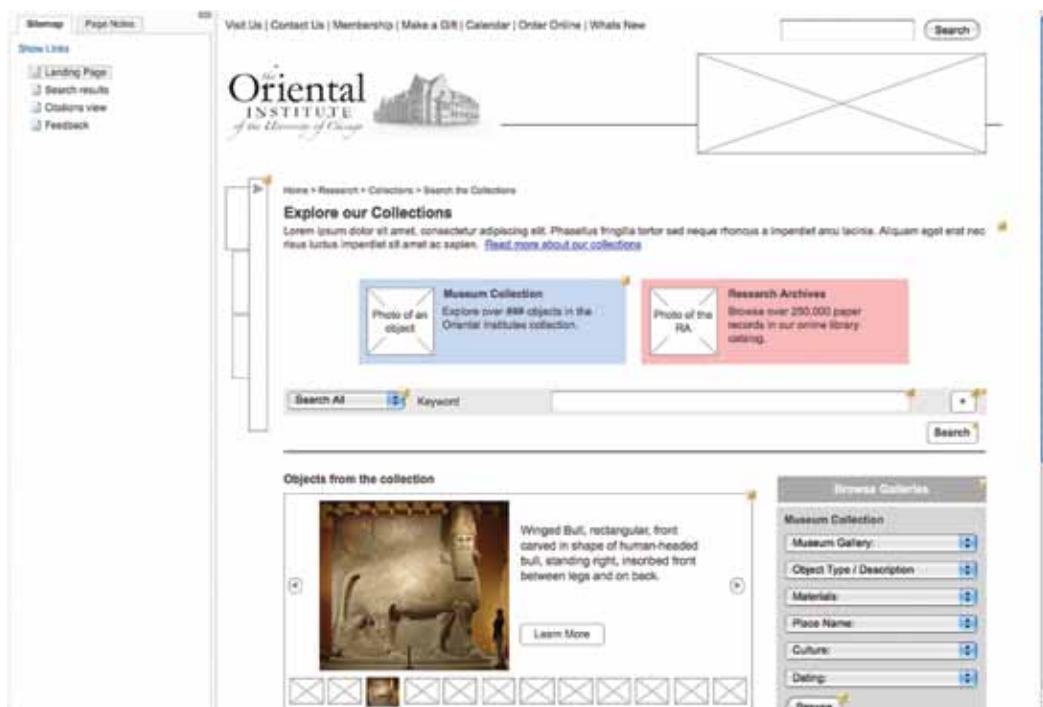


Figure 17. This wireframe of the Oriental Institute’s Collections landing page contains the search features and functionality that users will employ to access the collections database. The final web design is currently underway

Institute's collections database, we can be assured that the look and feel of the new front end for Oriental Institute collections will be useful and usable for years to come.

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## The Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center (KADC) and Artifact Analysis Programs

Moriah Grooms-Garcia

### The Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center

This past year a total of 915 visitors dug into the Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center (KADC). This simulated archaeological site is based on Tel Megiddo, a major trading hub of the ancient Near East. School groups, families, Boy Scouts, and a University of Chicago class got a chance to explore the science of archaeology hands-on. Using the real tools and systematic (albeit simplified) methods of the pros they uncover replicas of ancient objects, many of which can be found in the Oriental Institute's galleries (fig. 18).

This two-hour program is better than ever with the additions and adjustments made by Kat Silverstein and our graduate student content advisor Megaera Lorenz. The gallery tour, which makes up the second half of the KADC program, now includes interactives to illustrate key ideas: As participants learn about the development of agriculture they handle grain; students roll a replica cylinder seal across moist clay while standing among the cases of Mesopotamian cylinder seals; a picture of a lit ancient lamp facilitates the understanding of lighting a room by oil and wick. These are just three of the interactives held in the KADC facilitators' bag of goodies that give an added tactile element to the gallery tours.

Quotes from KADC participant surveys:

"We loved the dig. ... We liked how we actually got to feel like real archeologists." — Sixth Grader, Highcrest Middle School



*Figure 18. Moriah Grooms-Garcia explains the proper use of archaeological tools to the students from Thomas Middle School in Arlington Heights*

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“Students have not stopped talking about it! They loved it and really are interested in archaeology.” — Sixth Grade Teacher, Mitchell Elementary School

“I would come back here with my family ... but it wouldn’t be as good, because the [facilitator] makes it.” — Sixth Grader, Caluh Christian School

“I will spread the word of how great it was and we look forward to coming back next year!” — Sixth Grade Teacher, Immaculate Conception St. Joseph School

The last six months has seen the Boy Scout Archaeology Merit Badge program take off. Three of these KADC-centered programs were run, assisting fifty-six boy scouts in earning their badges. Reworked by Megaera Lorenz, the program can now boast to cover three-quarters of the badge’s requirements. Both Megaera and Moriah served as the archaeologists for these sessions, with Erica Griffin and Joshua Day facilitating the other aspects of the badge-earning experience. We enter the next year with the intention of running monthly Boy Scout programs (fig. 19).



Figure 19. Boy Scout troop 729 from Palos Heights earned their archaeology badges with the help of the KADC program

The tel was also put to use during the Be An Ancient Egyptian Artist Camp, which the Oriental Institute co-hosted with the north-side Lillstreet Art Center. In total, forty-five youngsters between the ages of five and eleven attended the week-long camp, which was offered for two sessions during the summer of 2011 and then again in spring 2012. For half the camps’ duration our own KADC facilitators filled the role of “artist-in-residence,” facilitating the making of Egyptian-themed crafts. Based at the Lillstreet Art Center, the camp culminated in a trip to the Oriental

Institute’s KADC and galleries. Over the course of the year Josh Day, Kyle Fahsel, Kendra Grimmett, Moriah Grooms-Garcia, Carole Krucoff, and Matthew Nunnelley were all involved in the presentation of this camp.

The KADC also proved to be a hit for the whole family. Our spring “Junior Archaeologists” program filled to the maximum, bringing in families from as far as Wisconsin. Parents hit the trench right alongside their kids, discovering the ancient past and the science of archaeology as a family.

We will continue to further develop and advertise the KADC, seeking to reach new populations and create variations on the original program. This year we filmed our facilitator Kyle Fahsel present the KADC to a group from the Hyde Park William H. Ray Elementary School. We plan to use the footage for training future KADC facilitators and create promotional footage.

Thanks to our 2011–12 KADC Facilitators! Joshua Day, graduate student-at-large Kyle Fahsel, MAPSS program; Erica Griffin, volunteer; and Emily Ho, undergraduate student.

## Artifact Analysis Program

Originally the brainchild of Kat Silverstein, this brand-new hands-on program was further developed by Megaera Lorenz and Moriah Grooms-Garcia. The Artifact Analysis Program can take seventy-six students at a time, doubling our workshop-style program capacity. This is a larger-scale alternative to the KADC, particularly necessary as schools must bring ever-larger groups on field trips due to new protocols and budget control. Since its inception in September, Artifact Analysis has had 689 participants.

The first half of this two-hour program places students in the position of an archaeologist post-dig. Each group of three to four students is given a box filled with artifacts that have supposedly been found in a particular “locus” of a site. Engaging their deductive reasoning skills, students draw conclusions about the people who created these artifacts. Science, literacy, and history are emphasized as students discover that their locus was, for example, a middle-class Mesopotamian woman’s room, the tomb of a wealthy Egyptian, or a kitchen. The second half of the program is devoted to a tour of the galleries led by the Oriental Institute docents.

In addition to the eleven school groups that participated in the Artifact Analysis Program, two non-school groups tried it out. A mixed-age church group used the program to set off their Biblical Emphasis tour. On a separate occasion, the University’s IT department came, finding it extremely “interesting and entertaining.” We look forward to further exploring the versatile audience this program could interest.

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