

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

VOLUNTEERS





Above and overleaf (detail): The Palace of Darius and columns of the Apadana at Persepolis. Schmidt Expedition, 1935 (D. 13310)

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Carol Ng-He and Leila Makdisi

This year we are proud to make new marks while continuing to refine and expand existing programs for adults, families, and teachers.

Adult and Community Programs

Carol Ng-He

Our focus for public engagement this year was to broaden our audience base by bringing the Oriental Institute into local neighborhoods, enhancing accessibility, and maximizing our reach on campus (figs. 1–2).

	Totals		Family & Youth		Adults		Educators	
	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance
TOTALS	88	2945	30	1862	36	599	22	484

Figure 1. Master attendance for public programs by audience type, Fiscal Year 2015–2016

Program Highlights

Community Scholars Program

This new public engagement program brings research associates, museum curators, and graduate students to local communities that we may not typically reach out to otherwise. We scheduled thirteen talks in different suburban public libraries and senior residences. Our Community Scholars presented on themes ranging from exhibition highlights to our archaeological research and discoveries. Interested parties can submit requests for Community Scholars on our website: oi.uchicago.edu/communityscholars (fig. 3).

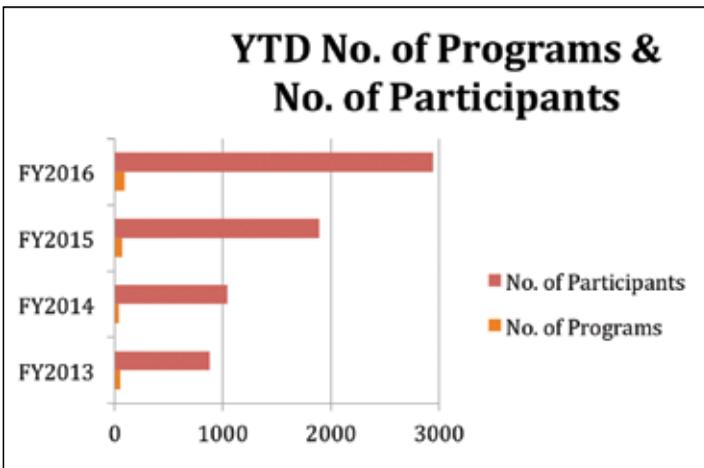


Figure 2. Year-to-date comparison of number of participants and number of programs



Figure 3. Sam Harris, PhD candidate at the University of Chicago and one of our Community Scholars, giving a talk at the Admiral at the Lake senior residence



Figure 4. Visitors in the Multisensory tour



Figure 5. Joey Cross, PhD student at the University of Chicago, giving the Stroller Tour

highlights in the permanent galleries (fig. 5).

Stroller Tour

This new quarterly program is a 30-minute thematic tour with a social component that engages caregivers and their pre-toddler age (18 months or younger) babies.

Continuing Education Courses, Workshops & Gallery Talks

We stabilized and refined the frequency and topical diversity of multi-week and single-day programs. Our highest attended programs include:

- Life in the Bible World (on-site course)
- The Archaeology of Iraq (on-site course)
- Egyptian Hieroglyphs for Museum-Goers (hybrid course)
- Archaeological Reconstruction Drawing (workshop)
- Aerial Perspectives: Documentary Photography Workshop (workshop)

Low Vision/Multisensory Program

We formed a new Access Advisory Group, comprised of individuals who have low vision or are blind and staff from various local organizations, such as the Blind Services Association. This group meets periodically to evaluate and advise the Oriental Institute's low-vision programs. Additionally, we launched a series of Multisensory Tours for blind visitors in which they explore the museum collections through scent, audio, and touch (fig. 4). We piloted a training program with a small group of docents on giving Visual Imaging Tours that provided blind visitors detailed verbal descriptions of the artifact

- The Uruk World (gallery talk)
- Nubia in Chicago: Celebrating Ten Years of the Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery (gallery talk)
- A Gateway to the West (gallery talk)

On the Horizon

Building on the strong foundation of adult continuing education courses, we revamped the popular Cuneiform by Mail course by introducing a new online course, Introduction to Sumerian Cuneiform, which is offered in fall 2016.

K-12 Educator Programs

Carol Ng-He

The focus of this year was to diversify the program types available to classroom teachers locally and nationally. We launched new membership, developed online teacher courses, furthered our relationships with select schools, and implemented new teacher awards.

Program Highlights

Field Trip Planning & Exhibition Guide

This new forty-page guide aims to help teachers plan a meaningful and enriching learning experience for students before, during, and after their visit to the Oriental Institute Museum. It includes recommended teaching strategies and ready-made student worksheets that align with Common Core State Standards.

Educator Pass

We introduced a new teacher membership to K-12 teachers, school administrators, and homeschool educators. For \$25 per year, Educator Pass subscribers receive all the benefits of the Family Membership rate, plus a print copy of Field Trip Planning & Exhibition Guide and special discounts offered at the Hyde Park Art Center. Since its inception, we have thirty new Educator Pass subscribers.

Investigating Nutrition Online Course

We continued collaborating with nationally recognized Project Archaeology this year by co-facilitating a new eight-week online course for classroom teachers. The course is based on the new curriculum guidebook *Investigating Nutrition: The Advent of Agriculture in Mesopotamia*, which the OI co-sponsored in spring 2015. A participant commented on the course: “I learned a great deal about using data as a primary source and analyzing it in the classroom. I was already familiar with most of the content but found the course very helpful in terms of how to look at the content in a more authentic and analytical way.” We plan to offer the course annually in the coming years.

STEAM-focused Teacher Cohort Academy

In this pilot professional-development program, teachers followed a structured pathway to engage students in exploring STEAM subjects in the ancient world. Teachers first participated in a series of training sessions in the fall guided by our graduate student content specialists,



Figure 6. Teacher cohort at Teacher Appreciation Night



Figure 7. "Don't Take My Stuff. Tell My Story." student exhibit

museum curators, and education staff members to learn about innovations in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. In the spring, the teachers brought their students to the Oriental Institute Museum for a field trip and participated in our new student interactive program, "Ancient Innovators," as part of their curriculum. This Common Core-aligned program immersed teachers in making connections across disciplines as they helped students build essential skills, such as interpersonal communication, critical thinking, problem solving, reading, and writing. By the end of the school year, teachers created new lesson plans that incorporated the Oriental Institute's collections and research, and presented it at our annual Teacher Appreciation Night (fig. 6); concurrently, a student exhibit titled "Don't Take My Stuff. Tell My Story." was on display in the lower level in collaboration with the Dream Rocket as a response to the lost history due to looting and destruction of cultural heritage (fig. 7).

Our partner schools of this program were Ellen Mitchell Elementary School, John W. Garvy Elementary School, John Hancock College Prep High School, and Ivy Hill Elementary School/ Arlington Heights School District 25. A total of 230 students participated in the program.

The Griffin Award for Teachers of Excellence

The Griffin Award for Teachers of Excellence was established to recognize outstanding teachers in social studies, art, and world history in the states of Illinois and Indiana. Three winners, selected from nominations, received the inaugural award: Shana Pearlmutter, art teacher at Bell Elementary School; Janet Roller-Schmidt, art teacher at Hinsdale South High School; and Scott Zagalak, 5th grade teacher at Alcott College Prep Middle School. Winners received an engraved plaque, a complimentary one-year Educator



Figure 8. Winners of the inaugural Griffin Award for Teachers of Excellence

Pass, and an invitation to become a member of the Oriental Institute's Teacher Advisory Council for the following school year, to advance our school engagement initiatives (fig. 8).

On the Horizon

Investigating the Neolithic Dwelling at Jarmo is a new investigation packet that will be published in collaboration with Project Archaeology. We are in the process of creating a student notebook and a teacher's instruction book using Project Archaeology's *Investigating Shelter* curriculum guidebook as the framework. The packet will be released in fall 2016 for the new eight-week online teacher course *Knowing Shelter, Knowing People: Learning from Prehistoric Dwelling*. Additionally, as part of the UChicago Arts Partners network (known as Amplify), we will develop a cross-campus arts education plan that serves primarily K-12 audiences on the south side of Chicago.

Youth and Family Programs

Leila Makdisi

I am reporting on the successful year of my colleague and predecessor Moriah Grooms-Garcia. Moriah stepped out of her role as Youth and Family Programs Manager in March 2016. This report is a testament to her great work and dedication to the Education Department of the Oriental Institute. She will be greatly missed; we continue to badger her through social media (fig. 9).

Interest in youth and family programming rose this past year; 2015-2016 saw larger audience attendance through a focused programming plan. We reached over 1,800 attendees,



Figure 9. A fun moment at Ancient Game Day/Nowruz Celebration in which Moriah Grooms-Garcia, former Youth & Family Program Manager, tests the photo op station

a 23 percent increase from last year, which indicates significantly increased attendance at each of the thirty programs we offered. Focusing on the aspects of the Oriental Institute that make us unique from other institutions — from our collections and depth of knowledge to our dusty dig site and goofy staff — has proved favorable to our visitors. We intend to keep it up by offering a varied and well-advertised selection of programs, backed by our repertoire of recurring, replicable workshops and drop-ins.

Program Highlights

“The docent and instructors were great. Brought deeper understanding to ancient history and writing.” — participant evaluation from Little Scribe

We further expanded our relationship with the Girl Scout Organization by attending their Cookie Kickoff Rally Outreach event and creating new Fun Patches that can be earned at our paid programs. Four Fun Patches now exist: Ancient Gamer, Ancient Scribe, Junior Archaeologist, and Mummy (connected to our Mummy Science program). Junior Archaeologist continues to be the big hit; we are looking to advertise our other patch-worthy programming through their organization this year (fig. 10).

Our quarterly family programs continue to exceed expectations. Mummies Night, the Halloween edition, culminated in a participant attendance of over 500. For the first time this year, Ancient Game Day partnered with Persian Nowruz for a joint celebration (fig. 11).

Workshops and Fee-based Programs

This year saw the full integration of our homeschool groups into the Family Workshops audience. They continue to participate in our traditional school offerings as well, specifically the Junior Archaeologists, Artifact Analysis, and Time Travelers Programs, reaching a combined audience of nearly 1,300 students.

On the Horizon

In this new fiscal year, we are looking toward expanding and revamping school group offerings. A new offering, Ancient Innovators, is moving out of the prototype stage and into our active repertoire (fig. 12).



Figure 10. All four Girl Scout patches



Figure 11. Snapshot of Ancient Game Day/Nowruz Celebration



Figure 12. Students participating in prototype Ancient Innovators field trip program



Figure 12. Little Scribe in action

We also hope to expand our programming partnerships with other UChicago arts partners (Amplify), by calling out and acknowledging how archaeology uses art as a scientific tool. We plan to prototype this approach within the framework of the Junior Archaeologists and/or Artifact Analysis, asking students to do a close reading of the relationships between artifacts and further cementing the STEAM partnership currently being adopted in K-12 learning.

Looking to expand on our youngest audience, we are coordinating a tweaked version of LamaSeuss in conjunction with our Stroller Tours to give that audience another reason to come out on these days. Maybe even getting the little ones to connect with artifacts through yoga. LamaSeuss-asana, anyone?

As always, we are also continuing the development of the Discovery Cart and other tangible instances of object-based learning throughout our galleries to promote interactivity with the general public.