

Using the Past to Shape the Future: Addressing Civic Issues at Historic Sites, Museums, and Cultural Centers

Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, University of Illinois at Chicago
November 18-19, 2004

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Thursday, November 18

8:30 Registration, refreshments

9:00 Welcome: Margaret Strobel and Rosa Cabrera

9:10 Introduction to the concept; introduction of Memoria Abierta: Liz Sevchenko, Vice President for Interpretation, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY

9:25-10:15 Opening Keynote by Memoria Abierta, Buenos Aires, Argentina

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-12:50 Workshop 1: Passing on the Passion: Building Connections Across Communities
How can sites that evoke powerful memories of one generation's -- or community's -- history inspire those who did not experience it first hand? Learn how to use sites associated with particular groups to engage broader communities.

Moderator: Lori Osborne, President of the Board, Frances Willard House, Evanston, IL

- Eileen Kurahashi, Vice President, National Center for the Preservation of Democracy at the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Maggie Russell-Ciardi, Immigrant Programs Coordinator, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY

Dialogue Training 1: Introduction to Dialogue

An introduction to the techniques and possibilities of dialogue facilitation by a professional facilitator and trainer. Work in a small group to learn by doing, engaging in different types of dialogue formats and techniques. Explore different ways to use these techniques in your own work, whether with visitors, community stakeholders, or even your own staff. Sessions include:

- exploring differences between dialogue and other common communication processes, such as conversation and debate;
- experimenting with techniques for generating meaningful exchange among diverse people, including on sensitive issues;
- exploring particular strategies for using historic sites as centers for dialogue;
- addressing general concerns and questions about dialogue, such as how to deal with sensitive issues, what kind of environment is required, how to train staff, and other issues.

- Tammy Bormann, Dialogue Consultant, New York, NY

12:50-2:00 Lunch

2:00-4:20 Workshop 2: Controversy or Community Dialogue? How Difficult Issues Can Provide Opportunities for Bringing People Together
Is disagreement necessarily divisive? Hear from museums that have taken on extremely controversial histories and used their exhibits to facilitate important dialogues among divided communities. Learn how they dealt with opposition from their Boards, city governments, and

other supporters, to make their institution stronger. Bring issues you've wanted to address but were afraid to – and work with your peers to develop ways to turn controversy into a community building tool.

Moderator: Laura S. Washington, Board Member, Field Museum, Chicago, IL

- Saudia Muwwakil, Public Information Officer, Martin Luther King National Historical Park, Atlanta, GA
- Steve Long, Vice President of Collections and Education, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY

4:20-4:35 Break

4:35-5:20 Report back from workshops

Friday, November 19

8:30 Registration, refreshments

8:45 Welcome

9:00-11:20 Workshop 3: Collaborating with Communities

The process of developing exhibits and programs can be as important a catalyst for civic engagement as the exhibits themselves. Involving communities in your creative process lays the groundwork for effective community dialogue in the future life of the institution. Hear panelists present examples of collaborations with their communities and assess the impact of the collaborative process on the final product.

Moderator: Patricia Melvin-Mooney, Associate Professor and Director of the Public History Program, Loyola University Chicago, IL

- Heather Koop, Northern District Manager, Historic Sites, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN
- Tamara Biggs, Director of Exhibitions, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

Workshop 4: Building Coalitions to Bring Communities Together: Cultural Connections

Find out how a mainstream museum and local community-based museums and cultural centers continue to enrich their knowledge of contemporary urban life in an effort to promote cultural understanding among Chicago's diverse communities. Learn how these partners are finding ways of sharing resources and connecting their history and contemporary issues through this program and beyond.

Moderator: Rosa Cabrera, Center for Cultural Understanding and Change, Field Museum, Chicago, IL

- Nilda Flores, President of the Executive Board, Institute for Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Chicago, IL
- Representative from the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, Chicago, IL
- Joseph Podlasek, Executive and Technical Director, American Indian Center, Chicago, IL

Dialogue Training 2: Introduction to Dialogue

See Thursday 10:30 am for session description above

11:20-11:35 Break

11:35-12:20 Funders' Roundtable

Hear from funders who support civic engagement work at museums and cultural centers. Discuss what aspects of the work they find most promising, ideas for sources of support, and strategies for accessing it.

Moderator: Sunny Fischer, Executive Director, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Chicago, IL

- Angel Ysaguirre, Director of Programs, Illinois Humanities Council, Chicago, IL
- Lesley Slavitt, Vice President, Chase Foundation, Chicago, IL
- Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Associate Director for Creativity and Culture, The Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY

12:20-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:45 Workshop 5: Inspiring Civic Engagement in Youth

Explore youth programs that move beyond helping youth understand history to providing innovative strategies for using the past to inspire students to be aware and involved with issues in their communities today.

Moderator: Monica Haslip, Executive Director, Little Black Pearl Workshop

- Ed Maldonado, Curator, Clarke House Museum, Chicago, IL and President of the Puerto Rican Arts Alliance, a community based arts organization
- David Scobey, Director, Arts of Citizenship Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Workshop 6: Creating the Conditions for Dialogue: Specific Strategies for Fostering Visitor Interaction at Museums and Cultural Centers

How can we inspire conversations among diverse publics about how history connects to their own lives—and the most pressing questions they face? How can museum staff serve as facilitators of these conversations? Participants share their experiences training docents to present multiple perspectives, raise open-ended questions about the past and the present, and facilitate dialogue among visitors on sometimes sensitive issues. Work with your peers to share challenges and develop strategies at your own sites.

Moderator: Liz Sevckenko, Vice President for Interpretation, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY

- Cathy Wilson, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Stephen (Steve) E. Adams, Superintendent, Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and Corps of Discovery II Project, Omaha, NE, and previously of Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Topeka, KS

Dialogue Training 3: Introduction to Dialogue

See Thursday 10:30 am for session description above

3:45-4:00 Break

4:00-4:45 Report back from workshops

4:45-5:00 Break

5:00-6:00 Closing Keynote by David Thelen, Professor of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN