

# Strategic Institutional Plan 2016 - 2021



Where  
**FUN** begins  
and **LEARNING**  
never ends!

# Table of Contents

Mission .....	3
Vision .....	3
Beliefs .....	3
Executive Summary .....	4
Museum History .....	6
Industry & Trends .....	8
About Imagine Children’s Museum .....	10
Programs and Services .....	12
Benefits to the Community .....	14
Code of Ethics .....	15
Strategic Planning Process .....	18
Goals / Strategies / Action Steps .....	19



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[www.ImagineCM.org](http://www.ImagineCM.org)

## Mission

Utilize playful learning to enrich children's lives.

*We are committed to:*

- C**elebrating creativity and imagination
- H**elping young learners thrive
- I**nstilling a community connection
- L**earning experiences powered by play
- D**eveloping unique exhibits and programs
- R**eaching out to all children
- E**mbracing diversity and inclusion
- N**urturing child/caring adult interaction

## Vision

Imagine Children's Museum is a leader in playful learning, helping children and families to thrive and strengthening the community.

## Beliefs

- ★ All children need nurturing
- ★ A lifelong love of learning starts with play
- ★ Learning occurs in many different ways
- ★ Interactive, hands-on, experiential opportunities cultivate inquisitive minds
- ★ Play is essential to learning and the healthy development of a child
- ★ Children flourish in physically and emotionally safe environments
- ★ Early childhood experiences significantly influence a child's future
- ★ All children deserve opportunities to playfully learn
- ★ Families are important as a child's first teacher and role model
- ★ Connection to a caring community establishes a sense of belonging
- ★ Community wellbeing is directly impacted by the wellbeing of children and families
- ★ Diverse groups that join together to support and educate children enrich our community and society

# Executive Summary

Imagine Children’s Museum emerged in 1991 as the result of a grassroots effort that began in the late 1980s to fulfill the need in Snohomish County, Washington for a place where children and their families could spend quality time learning together year round. Until September 2004, Imagine delivered playful learning activities to children and families in small leased spaces. A capital campaign—distinguished by the dedication of staff and donors—resulted in the purchase of a permanent 45,000 square foot home in downtown Everett, Washington. Since then our programs, exhibits and enrichment activities have drawn over two million people from the greater Puget Sound region and beyond.

Led by Executive Director Nancy Johnson and a dedicated Board of Directors, Imagine now employs 30 full and part-time staff, and utilizes more than 600 volunteers each year. With a reputation for fiscal strength and responsibility, Imagine has completed two capital campaigns and continues to thrive. The vision and the hard work of our early supporters and the dedication of those who are following in their footsteps ensure that Imagine Children’s Museum will remain a viable, strong and valuable community resource for generations to come.

Imagine remains a unique resource for children and families in Snohomish County. Although Snohomish County has the third largest population in Washington State, it does not boast the amenities of neighboring King County: a science center, zoo, aquarium and numerous museums. Imagine is a cornerstone in Snohomish County, giving children informal learning experiences that build a foundation for academic and life success. Imagine is vital to the growth and wellbeing of our children and our community.

Imagine Children’s Museum serves children ages 1-12 years and their caregivers (parents, grandparents, guardians, etc.). Three floors of interactive exhibits are designed to promote family togetherness and educational enrichment in science, math, history and art as well as highlight the unique qualities of Everett and Snohomish County. Social/emotional skills and physical abilities blossom through hands-on exploration, discovery and imaginative play. Immersive exhibit areas and enrichment classes are designed to develop academic and life skills—critical thinking, independence and self-confidence—in children of all abilities, regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status. We strive to promote cultural awareness and inclusiveness in all our work. We primarily serve families in Snohomish County and the greater Puget Sound region, but each year the Museum draws visitors from all over the U.S. and the world. Annually we serve more than 230,000 people through the Museum and outreach programs.

The Museum itself has become a cherished gathering place for families. Regardless of family structure, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, all families need to be strengthened and nurtured from time to time. Imagine fulfills this need by providing a safe haven for families: a stable and creative environment in which families can focus on having fun while learning together and regaining their connection to each other and their community. Furthermore, Imagine celebrates and advances cultural awareness, diversity and acceptance within our community.

One evening each month, we offer free Museum access to ensure that all area families are given the opportunity to benefit from the exhibits and activities regardless of their ability to afford admission. Each year Free Admission Night draws more than 10,000 visitors, and the past two years have shown that more than 65% come from low-income households. Discounted admission and free memberships, events and programs in the Museum are other ways we make it easier for all families to share in the hands-on, playful learning throughout the year.

Imagine's connections throughout Snohomish County are expansive in breadth and depth. We partner with daycares, Snohomish County school districts, non-traditional school groups, social service providers, youth organizations and other nonprofits to bring playful learning opportunities to our most vulnerable citizens. Partnerships include working with Snohomish County caseworkers and family and military support centers to ensure we address a wide scope of emerging community needs. Primarily those needs include serving low-income, at-risk youth suffering from the challenges of parents juggling multiple jobs or job loss, family illness, death, divorce, homelessness and intergenerational poverty. A summer literacy program and afterschool science clubs in area schools are among the many ways we work to provide educational enrichment and emotional support and guidance to those children in Snohomish County who need it most.

Imagine Children's Museum has been recognized locally and nationally for exhibits and programs. While we are honored to be distinguished by numerous awards, project collaborations and grant opportunities, our greatest reward comes from having created a children's museum that connects diverse people from throughout the community, bringing them together for a common cause—improving the lives of children.

In addition to serving children and their families, Imagine Children's Museum is an unduplicated resource for community service providers working to meet the needs of area children and families. In essence, we are an asset for other community resources and we continually strive to grow in that capacity.

Children are more engaged learners when they are allowed to explore, discover and create at their own pace. Research shows us that, "In the short and long term, play benefits cognitive, social, emotional and physical development ... When play is fun and child-directed, children are motivated to engage in opportunities to learn. Moreover, when given choices in play, children can find activities that are best suited to their individual needs." While schools are spending less time on play, art, music and child-directed activities due to rigorous assessment requirements, Imagine is providing these experiences that build a foundation for lifelong learning. Even more impactful, Imagine delivers playful learning in a physically and emotionally safe place that is aware and accepting of diverse cultures and learning abilities so all feel welcome. For these reasons, leadership, staff, educators and volunteers at Imagine Children's Museum are committed to advocating for Imagine's values and goals. Priorities for the future are focused on educating others about the importance of playful learning, promoting awareness of Imagine as a community resource, increasing fiscal strength and security to ensure longevity and, ultimately, broadening the reach to deliver culturally and academically rich playful opportunities to all children.

In support of these priorities, a comprehensive outline of goals and action plans has been developed to guide the ongoing efforts of Board, staff, educators and volunteers who strive to forward Imagine's mission and vision every day.

**Nancy L. Johnson**  
**Executive Director**



Future Executive Director



# Museum History

Imagine Children’s Museum evolved from a grassroots effort that began in the late 1980s. Passion to build on a compelling idea, perseverance to overcome odds and dedication to respond to emerging community needs have been mainstay factors of Imagine’s success from day one. Dedicated leadership continues to forward the mission and vision of those who first imagined a promising future for our community’s children and families.

- 1980** The Quality of Life Committee of the Snohomish County Children’s Commission indicates the vital need for a place where children and families are able to spend quality time together year round. Subsequently, the elected Snohomish County Council allocates funds for a half-time employee to oversee the development of a children’s museum. Relevant activities are piloted in classrooms and youth service centers throughout the community.
- 1991** The Children’s Museum of Snohomish County (CMSC) incorporates with significant grassroots effort from local community members including Snohomish County Councilwoman Liz McLaughlin.
- 1993** Volunteers spend time and energy renovating a vacated retail space in Marysville Mall, a neighboring Everett community, which becomes CMSC’s first dedicated location. The first year is a success with more than 15,000 visitors.
- 1994** Marysville Mall is sold and CMSC is required to relocate. While searching for a new space, CMSC continues to serve the community via outreach Museum-on-the-Go programs for teachers and other providers working with young children.
- 1995** CMSC opens in a temporary downtown Everett location at 3013 Colby Avenue while awaiting a new permanent home in McCollum Park, expected to be developed by Snohomish County. Once again, strong attendance validates the need for CMSC.
- 1998** Environmental concerns halt development of McCollum Park. Meanwhile, the City of Everett notifies CMSC that they will not renew its existing lease at the Colby Avenue location due to development plans; therefore, the need for a new site becomes urgent.
- 1999** Dr. William P. Brust, a local retired dentist, donates an out-of-area investment property to provide the first major gift to CMSC, and the financial credibility CMSC needs to move forward with planning for a new a capital campaign.
- 2000** To create a permanent home for CMSC, local philanthropists John and Idamae Schack donate \$1 million to purchase the old Bank of Everett building on the corner of Wall Street and Hoyt Avenue in downtown Everett. Due to its location, layout and potential for outdoor play area, it is identified as a nearly perfect building.
- 2001** After significant planning, a \$4.5 million capital campaign is launched. The campaign reaches goal.
- 2003** Renovation of the building begins, which includes demolition of the interior. An all-new interior and interactive exhibits are created to reflect the mission and the vision of CMSC.
- 2004** The grand opening of renamed Imagine Children’s Museum (Imagine) takes place on October 17 with lines of visitors surrounding the building. Imagine garners national attention because of its child-centered interior and engaging hands-on exhibits. During the first year, 150,000 are served, more than doubling initial projections. The capital campaign is completed on time and under budget.

- 2005** Due to savings and in-kind donations during the capital campaign and initial build-out of the building, the Rooftop Adventure is completed without requiring the originally planned second phase of the capital campaign. The Rooftop Adventure opens in September.
- 2006** Imagine's endowment is started with donations from John and Idamae Schack.
- 2007** Imagine learns that property located on the same block as the Museum building is pending sale. This property includes the PacColby building and the parking lots adjacent to the Museum, which are used by visitors and are critical to providing safe access to the Museum. Sale of the property would render the Museum land-locked.
- 2008** After the pending sale of the adjacent property terminates, Imagine's Board of Directors determines the long term sustainability of the Museum is dependent upon acquisition of the property. The Board decides to turn the existing small, covered parking area of the building into much needed multi-purpose space. A kitchen area and workshop for facilities maintenance and exhibit repair and development is included in the plan. A \$5.2 million capital campaign (The Legacy Project) is launched to fulfill these needs. Like the first campaign, The Legacy Project reaches goal at completion.
- 2009** The capital campaign is underway in the worst economic times since the Great Depression. Yet individuals, businesses and foundations step up and provide support. Donors include many who supported the first capital campaign.
- 2010** In July, Imagine Children's Museum reaches one million visitors.
- 2011** The construction project begins with a focus on creating a lodge-themed space that reflects the magnificence of the Pacific Northwest, specifically Snohomish County. Hand-hewn logs are custom cut for the space and hand-carved wall panels highlighting wildlife and marine life adorn the walls. A large stone fireplace stands as a focal point, and a hand-carved stage reflecting an old growth stump provides the perfect scene for entertainment.
- 2012** The Lodge is completed. Imagine has grown to serving more than 225,000 each year and boasts numerous local, regional and national awards.
- 2014** Imagine celebrates 10 years in the Wall Street location. Over two million have been served since opening its doors. Grand opening of a new water exhibit coincides with the October anniversary celebration. Major refurbishment of the Dino Dig and Rooftop Adventure exhibit areas are completed. The Quasi Sustainability Fund, a reserve fund created to ensure Imagine can withstand any unforeseen circumstance, reaches \$2 million. Imagine increases contracts for underserved outreach programs.
- 2015** Imagine overhauls its mission statement and institutional strategic plan as it looks to a future of growth and sustainability to continue bringing playful learning experiences to all children and families.

# Industry & Trends

In 1899, The Brooklyn Children's Museum in New York was the first in the United States to open. With the earliest museums opening on the east coast and in the Midwest, today there are more than 300 children's museums throughout the world.

The Association of Children's Museums (ACM) is the professional service organization for the children's museum field. According to ACM, they are "the only organization representing museums and professionals dedicated to early childhood play, the starting point in the continuum of lifelong learning." From the ACM website, the following information addresses the role of children's museums and current trends (Association of Children's Museums 2015):

## Why Visit a Children's Museum?

Children's museums are places where children learn through play and exploration in environments designed just for them. Reflecting their diverse communities, children's museums create playful, interactive learning experiences. In an increasingly complex world, children's museums provide a place where all kids can learn through play with the caring adults in their lives.

## Children's Museums and Vacations

Many children's museums are located in major travel and tourism destinations. More and more families visit children's museums each year for unique, face-to-face fun, enlightenment and shared experiences not found in traditional museums or other popular destinations.

Adults plan vacations, and while parents and caregivers do their best to build-in activities for their children, many of these activities require adult-like strength, skills or knowledge.

That's not the case at children's museums. Peek inside a children's museum and you'll see babies and toddlers touching a variety of textures, stacking blocks, crawling through a tunnel or blowing bubbles. Take another look inside a children's museum to see boys and girls enter a 19th century ship where they hoist a net full of fish, take part in a fishing derby, raise and lower sails and semaphore flags, all the while building an understanding of maritime history. Say adiós to rigid rules: at children's museums the general rule is: Please Touch! Children's museums produce programs and exhibits that transcend age and experience, and empower children to set their own pace—important features for young vacationers who can get overwhelmed by being away from home and exhausted from an action-packed itinerary.

## Children's Museums and Lasting Memories

Often it's the downtime inbetween the periods of highly stimulated entertainment that children and families will remember fondly. Children's museums offer a variety of activities, some as simple as reading a book or pretending to shop at a farmer's market. Other hands-on experiences may invite a family to learn about a foreign culture by trying on clothes and costumes native to a people or country, engaging in an "authentic" festival or creating traditional folk art. Many children's museums have exhibits that provide families an inside look into the workings of machines or the principles of science. Children's museums offer opportunities for family learning as well for time to bond with family members.



## Welcoming Places

Due to the interactive nature of children's museums, most families can participate in exhibits regardless of their language fluency. Many museums provide signage and literature in more than one language. Kids will be delighted to find furniture, props and materials scaled to their size. Additionally, many children's museums create opportunities within exhibits for children and family members who use wheelchairs, or who rely heavily on their sense of sound or touch because of differing abilities.

## Children's Museum Facts ...

- There are 341 ACM museum members, representing a total of 22 countries. Approximately 23 percent of these children's museums are in the start-up phase.
- Including children's museums, businesses, individuals and museums with programs for children, ACM has more than 515 members.
- According to 2007 data, more than 30 million children and families annually visited children's museums.
- Sixty-five percent of children's museums are located in urban areas.
- Twenty-three percent of children's museums are located in suburban areas.
- Twelve percent of children's museums are located in rural areas.
- Thirty-five percent of children's museums are flagships in downtown revitalization projects.
- Sixty-two ACM member children's museums are undergoing a capital campaign in order to build a new facility or expand an existing facility.
- Four percent of children's museums are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.
- Eighteen children's museums are green buildings; 24 museums are in the process of building a green facility. Therefore, 12 percent of ACM member institutions have committed themselves to be green children's museums.
- In 1975 there were approximately 38 children's museums in the United States. Eighty new children's museums opened between 1976 and 1990. Since 1990, an additional 125 have opened. There are about 70 children's museums in the planning phase.
- Outreach programs in ACM member museums extended to nearly 4 million people in 2007.
- Eighty-one percent of ACM museums have a dedicated early childhood exhibit space specifically designed for infants and toddlers.
- Thirty-five percent of ACM museums have an outdoor exhibit and/or garden.
- Forty-nine percent run after school programs.
- Sixty percent develop curriculum materials.
- Seventy percent provide school outreach.
- The largest children's museum is The Children's Museum of Indianapolis (Indiana), which has a total of 433,000 square feet.



# About Imagine Children’s Museum

Imagine Children’s Museum in Everett, WA is dedicated to providing playful learning experiences to children and their parents or caregivers. Hands-on exhibit areas, enrichment activities and outreach services and programs are designed to enhance developmental skills in all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, learning ability or socioeconomic status. Exhibits also highlight the community’s unique geographic and historic attributes in order to instill an appreciation of the local environment and civic pride. The Museum fulfills the need for a place where all children and their families can spend quality time together year round. Imagine is accessible, nurturing and affords all families the opportunity to enjoy playful learning in a physically and emotionally safe environment.

## Persons Served

Imagine Children’s Museum and outreach programs currently serve more than 230,000 annually, and have served more than two million total:

- Children ages 1 through 12 years and their caregivers (parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, family members, guardians of the court, etc.)
- LMI community members (low- to moderate-income)
- Underserved, at-risk groups such as homeless and foster children
- Children with learning and/or physical differences
- Teachers and childcare providers and their students
- Human service providers (Battered Women’s Shelter, Gospel Mission, Providence Hospital, Housing Hope, Head Start, etc.)
- Tourists to Snohomish County

Imagine currently serves more than 24,000 annually through free access programs and incentives to ensure all families have an opportunity to benefit from Imagine’s services regardless of their ability to afford admission.

## Demographics

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

In 2015, Snohomish County recorded a population of 757,600, the third largest county population in Washington State. Inclusive of both urban and rural communities, Snohomish County has an estimated 15.6% of children under 18 years old living below the poverty level.

	Snohomish County	Washington State
<b>Population by age, 2014</b>		
Under 5 years old	6.2%	6.3%
Under 18 years old	23.2%	22.7%
65 years and older	12.1%	14.1%
<b>Race/ethnicity, 2014</b>		
White	80.2%	80.7%
Black	3.1%	4.1%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1.6%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	10.7%	8.9%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	9.7%	12.2%

## Museum Operating Information (As of September 1, 2015)

For the most up-to-date news and information, visit Imagine's website at [www.imaginecm.org](http://www.imaginecm.org).

### Hours of Operation

The Museum is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday and some Mondays.

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (3:00 - 5:00 p.m. is ½ price admission)
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (9:00 - 10:00 a.m. member's time)
Sunday	11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*Rooftop Adventure open, weather & program permitting.*

### General Admission

All children must be accompanied by a grown-up 18-years or older. There must be one adult for every six children.

Children (under 1 year) .....	Free
General Admission (adults and children) .....	\$10.00
Thursday 3:00 – 5:00 p.m .....	\$5.00

### Field Trips

Per Person .....	\$6.00
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### Free Admission

General public: The third Friday of each month from 5:30 – 9:00 pm.

Military: The first Sunday of each month from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### Memberships

Military Membership .....	\$75
Grandparent Membership .....	\$90
Family Fun Membership .....	\$115
Two Fun Membership .....	\$75
Extravaganza Membership .....	\$135



# Programs and Services

## Current Programs and Services

Imagine educators have been developing and delivering informal education for more than 15 years. We have developed a reputation for delivering high quality, age-appropriate programs and have been recognized as a local and national leader in enrichment opportunities. Whether in the Museum or through Museum-on-the-Go outreach programs, Imagine strives to provide support, encouragement and enrichment opportunities to all families.

**Hands-on interactive exhibits** allow children and families visiting the Museum to learn together through play. Imagine empowers children, their caregivers and our community.

**Playful learning activities** include many offerings like Guest Artist Series, Art Rocks! and the Tuesday Tales literacy program. These activities are free with Museum admission and provide experiences that may not otherwise be accessible to families due to financial or travel restriction.

**Cultural Programs** celebrate worldwide traditions and expose children to a variety of playful education, music and art while promoting awareness and acceptance. Local Partnerships teach children and families through programs about valuable resources such as public transportation, international trade, recreation and environmental stewardship.

**Free Admission Night** delivers the gift of time for all children and their families to be together within a safe learning environment. This is vital to the academic, social and emotional growth and wellbeing of the families who cannot otherwise afford to visit Imagine.

**Educational enrichment programs** are available both at Imagine and through the Museum-on-the-Go program. These educator-led programs make core subject matters dynamic and captivating for children of different learning styles and abilities. Programs are offered through Imagine field trips, programs in schools and childcare centers, Family Nights, and camps/classes.

**Science Club** focuses on giving at-risk youth afterschool science experiences. Afterschool enrichment keeps kids safe, instills a sense of belonging and stretches young minds by introducing them to new ideas through examination and experimentation.

**Discovery Club** is our summer program for students behind in reading. The literacy program helps prepare at-risk children for reading competency by infusing the skills and self-confidence they need to succeed in school.

**Special Events** like Sandtastic! provide family entertainment while celebrating local artists and our environment. Toothapalooza uses fun games and free pediatric exams to teach children and families about oral health.

**Afterhours Gatherings** allow for organized celebrations in the Museum. During and after hours birthday parties, corporate events and family reunions are just a few ways Imagine helps make any occasion special.

**Birthday Parties** at Imagine offer a special place to celebrate. Our award winning creative atmosphere, one-of-a-kind exhibits and spacious party rooms make every event stand out.

**Group Gatherings** at the Museum, whether large or small, get rave reviews. The variety of spaces are perfect for team building, trainings, meetings, retreats, reunions and receptions.

**Museum Store** inside Imagine Children's Museum offers age-appropriate books, toys and games to supplement each visitor's educational experience.

### Reaching out

Exhibits, programs and activities are available for children ages 1-12 and their parents, caregivers, daycare providers, teachers and other adults important in the life of a child.

### Nurturing adult/child relationships

Early interactions are the foundation for how children think, feel and respond to situations the rest of their lives. Adults have unique opportunities to become active participants in the child's development.



### Embracing very special children

- Low income
- Learning or physically challenged
- Developmentally delayed
- Foster children
- ... and others with special needs

### Instilling a sense of belonging

Children and families come together and connect, establishing new friendships and links within the community.

### Inspiring life-long learning

Playful childhood enrichment opportunities plant the early seeds for a love of learning that last a lifetime.

### Enriching children's lives at the Museum and beyond

- Field trips
- Classes
- Camps
- Museum-on-the-Go
- Family Nights



### Infusing fun into learning

Art, culture, history, science, health and other subjects are injected with the WOW factor ensuring that learning is fun for all.

### Celebrating diversity and opening windows to the world.

Culturally diverse events and activities allow children to experience the wonders of the world—increasing awareness, understanding and mutual respect.

### Engaging hands-on, interactive exhibits

Unique exhibits spark imagination, arouse curiosity, encourage problem solving, promote cooperative play and are "cool" for the young and young at heart.



# Benefits to the Community

## Imagine a place for children ...

The Museum is a vital resource in our community for children because it:

- Fosters self-esteem and independence by allowing children to experiment and create at their own pace
- Develops critical thinking that boosts intellectual growth in school and eventually the workplace
- Provides a world of hands-on playful activities that encourage exploration, reaching children of many learning preferences and abilities. The more children want to learn, or feel encouraged to learn, the more they will learn
- Teaches children it's okay to try, fail and try again. There may be many ways to accomplish a task and no "right or wrong" way to problem solve
- Introduces children to careers in many fields and fosters the belief that children can be or do anything they can dream
- Keeps children safe and gives a sense of belonging
- Gives children the opportunity to meet and play with children of different ethnicities, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Encourages parent/caregiver involvement in their child's playful learning
- Supports children from any type of family structure
- Delivers exhibits and programs that address the developmental needs of children regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender
- Emphasizes unique qualities of the area in order to harbor civic pride and concern for the environment

## Imagine: a place for community

Children thrive in a healthy community. As important as it is to serve our children, it is just as important to serve our local businesses, workers, neighbors and friends that make up our children's environment. Imagine helps the community prosper because it:

- Acts as a resource for other nonprofits that provide services to children and their families
- Stands as a family gathering place accessible year round, rain or shine
- Uses Museum-on-the-Go programs and field trips to complement traditional school lessons
- Collaborates with school administrators, teachers, early childhood providers and family service workers to strengthen community relationships
- Offers creative ways to teach the history and rich culture of Snohomish County
- Showcases local artists through the Art Studio guest instructor panel and programs such as Guest Performance Series
- Reinforces the value of community service workers through programs that focus on topics like fire safety and pediatric oral health
- Contributes to the revitalization of downtown Everett
- Helps create community economic opportunities by attracting businesses and recruiting employees based on quality of life in the area—reinforces that this is a great place to live and work
- Promotes tourism in Snohomish County as a family vacation destination
- Encourages patrons to spend more money dining, shopping and utilizing services surrounding the Museum, enhancing community economic opportunities
- Builds relationships in the community and reaffirms the importance of our services to develop a healthy society
- Helps the underserved population by granting free and discounted Museum access and outreach programs in local schools, military family service centers, childcare centers and more
- Transcends socioeconomic barriers
- Fosters multicultural awareness and acceptance
- Supports and celebrates diversity and differences of ability
- Evolves to support a continually changing world

# Code of Ethics

As a grassroots organization, Imagine Children’s Museum has worked over the years to become a respected and trusted nonprofit organization. It is understood by the Board of Directors and Executive Director that the reputation Imagine has earned could be lost if the trust of the public is compromised. Independent Sector (IS), a leadership network for nonprofits, has drafted an outline of principles that is intended for use as a model that organizations can draw from in reviewing or adopting a code of ethics. In developing our own code of ethics, Imagine looked to the professional standards drawn by IS as we believe the work they have done is valuable due to the process used and expertise of individuals involved.<sup>1</sup> Imagine Children’s Museum is grateful for the work done by IS to create a document that allows an organization of our size to convey the ideals we value today and for the future.

## Imagine Children’s Museum Code of Ethics

### I. Personal and Professional Integrity

Imagine Children’s Museum has developed a reputation of trust as staff, Board members and volunteers demonstrate a culture of honesty, integrity and transparency in work done on behalf of Imagine. Imagine promotes an inclusive environment that values respect, fairness and integrity.

### II. Mission

Imagine Children’s Museum has a clearly defined mission, vision and beliefs, approved by the Board of Directors, in pursuit of the public good. All of its programs and activities support the mission and those who work for or on behalf of Imagine understand and are loyal to the mission, vision and beliefs. The mission is responsive to the constituencies and communities served by Imagine.

### III. Governance

Imagine Children’s Museum has a Board of Directors that is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of Imagine and oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of the organization.

The Board of Directors:

- Ensures that its Board members have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that members understand and fulfill their Board duties acting for the benefit of Imagine and its public purpose
- Has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, recusal or other means
- Is responsible for the hiring, firing, and regular review of the performance of the Executive Director, and ensures that the compensation of the Executive Director is reasonable and appropriate
- Ensures that the Executive Director and appropriate staff provide the Board of Directors with timely and comprehensive information so that the Board can effectively carry out its duties
- Ensures that Imagine conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty
- Ensures that Imagine promotes working relationships with Board members, staff, volunteers, and program beneficiaries that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness
- Ensures that Imagine is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all Board, staff and volunteer positions
- Ensures that policies of Imagine are in writing, clearly articulated and officially adopted
- Ensures that the resources of Imagine are responsibly and prudently managed
- Ensures that Imagine has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively

### IV. Legal Compliance

Imagine Children’s Museum complies with applicable laws and regulations and seeks legal counsel if and when appropriate. Leadership and staff remain diligent in their efforts to be knowledgeable of and in compliance with legal issues.

## V. Responsible Stewardship

Imagine Children's Museum and its subsidiaries manage their funds responsibly and prudently. Imagine:

- Dedicates a reasonable percentage of its annual budget to programs in pursuance of its mission
- Dedicates an adequate amount to administrative expenses to ensure effective internal systems, competent staff and other expenditures critical to professional management
- Compensates staff, and any others who may receive compensation, reasonably and appropriately
- Dedicates a reasonable amount to fundraising costs
- Maintains the building and exhibits regularly, and responds in a timely manner to exhibit and building maintenance issues
- Does not accumulate operating funds excessively; however, does maintain reserves in order to protect the organization in the event of an unforeseen circumstance
- Prudently draws from endowment funds consistent with donor intent and to support the public purpose of Imagine
- Ensures that spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfill the mission of Imagine
- Ensures financial reports are factually accurate and complete in material respects

## VI. Openness and Disclosure

Imagine Children's Museum provides comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders and is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. Information about Imagine will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of the organization. Basic informational data about Imagine Children's Museum such as the Form 990, reviews and audited financial statements will be posted on Imagine's website or otherwise made available to the public. All solicitation materials accurately represent Imagine's policies and practices and will reflect the dignity of program beneficiaries. Financial, organizational and program reports will be complete and accurate in material respects.

## VII. Program Evaluation

Imagine Children's Museum regularly reviews program effectiveness and incorporates lessons learned into future programs. Imagine is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and develops means to promote learning from its programs and activities. Imagine is responsive to changes in the industry and is responsive to the needs of its constituencies.

## VIII. Inclusiveness and Diversity

Imagine Children's Museum has a diversity statement promoting inclusiveness and its Board, staff and volunteers reflect diversity and consistently support an environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Imagine embraces inclusiveness in its hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment and constituencies served.

*Imagine's diversity statement is as follows:*

The world becomes a better place when respect, tolerance and inclusion are shared values. At Imagine Children's Museum, we endeavor to exemplify these values that help shape society for all children and future generations. Imagine is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing environment and playful learning experiences that inspire children to respect and value themselves, others and the world in which we all live. Imagine welcomes and values our diverse community and strives to instill a sense of belonging. Our Board, staff and committees are reflective of our community and share the commitment to respect. A diverse team ensures that we gain insights and understandings that will allow us to better serve our constituents and strengthen our community. We encourage visitors and all others associated with Imagine to respect these values that protect from discrimination in regard to race, age, gender identity, physical ability, sexual orientation, family structure, citizenship or socioeconomic background. Together, we will make the world a better place.

## IX. Commitment to Donors - Donor Bill of Rights

Imagine Children's Museum is committed to earning and keeping donor confidence, trust and respect. As a result the organization will not trade, share or sell a donor's personal information with anyone else, nor send donor mailings on behalf of other organizations.



Imagine Children's Museum upholds the following donor rights:

- To be informed of the mission of Imagine Children's Museum, the way resources will be used and Imagine's capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on Imagine's Board of Directors and to expect the Board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities
- To have access to Imagine's most recent financial reports
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given
- To receive an appropriate acknowledgement, recognition and tax receipt
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing Imagine Children's Museum will be professional in nature
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of Imagine or hired solicitors
- To have the opportunity for their names be deleted from mailing lists that Imagine may intend to share
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers<sup>2</sup>

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*1 The Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Organizations was drafted by a subcommittee of the Independent Sector Ethics and Accountability Committee. Its members (with affiliations at the time of their service on the subcommittee) included:*

- Cass Wheeler, president and CEO, American Heart Association, chair
- Ed Able, president and CEO, American Associations of Museums;
- Angela Glover Blackwell, president, Policy Link;
- The Reverend J. Bryan Hehir, president, Catholic Charities USA;
- Graham Phaup, executive director, Institute for Global Ethics;
- H. Art Taylor, president and CEO, BBB Wise Giving Alliance; and,
- Bill Trueheart, president and CEO, The Pittsburgh Foundation

*2 These ten points are taken from A Donor Bill of Rights, developed by the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, and the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and endorsed by Independent Sector.*



# Strategic Planning Process

Imagine Children's Museum has a history of strategic planning and management that has provided thoughtful focus and direction. As such, Imagine has succeeded in rising to the challenges of an evolving industry and community to become the resource it is today.

Strategic plans are carried out daily in all departments to address the interests of leadership, staff, members, donors and friends of Imagine Children's Museum. Ongoing assessment and evaluation includes one day of review by the Board annually to ensure we are meeting all critical needs to carry out the mission and vision of Imagine. A Strategic Fulfillment Team was created in fall 2015 to oversee the planning, implementation and fulfillment of Imagine's latest five-year strategic institutional plan. The Team is comprised of Museum leadership staff and Board members who are dedicated to furthering the mission, vision and beliefs of Imagine. The Team's purpose is to help ensure the plan is realistic and viable, and that it reflects the ideals of the community, staff and Board of Imagine Children's Museum.

Although planning for the future has been ongoing, the staff and Board one-day retreats in 2015 focused on re-evaluating Imagine's mission and vision and the development of goals that will allow Imagine to prosper in coming years. These retreats initiated discussions that helped define each department's resources and needs, and communicate anticipated direction of Imagine's programs and services. Board members continued discussions during monthly meetings to help refine goals and action plans to meet needs within every facet of the organization that will allow us to carry out Imagine's mission.

In addition to Board, staff, volunteers and the Strategic Fulfillment Team, feedback/input from colleagues and constituents was crucial to ensuring a comprehensive planning process:

- A community focus group comprised of business leaders, donors and Museum members/visitors
- Research and conversations with colleagues
- Research through professional affiliations such as Association of Children's Museums (ACM), American Alliance of Museums (AAM), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), Independent Sector (IS) and Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)

Ongoing assessment of this five-year plan will focus on sustainability and growth to ensure Imagine Children's Museum continues to provide playful learning opportunities to a spectrum of children and their caregivers. Evaluation of goals and action plans will include extending timelines as necessary to facilitate each department's success. Strategic planning has been, and will remain, a foundational piece of our desire and drive for continuous improvement.



# Strategic Goals 2016 - 2021

Strategic planning has been, and will remain, a foundational piece of our desire and drive for continuous improvement. The Board's commitment to strategic planning success is supported by a sustainability fund that can help cover costs which were unable to be fully identified during the initial planning process. \*Goals revised by the Board of Directors September 2019

## GOAL 1

### BROADEN PLAYFUL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES

#### GOAL 1 - STRATEGY 1

**Advance innovative programs and exhibit strategies or experiences that support the Five Domains of Child Development**

**Action Step:** For existing and future programs and exhibits, apply Program Planning, Evaluation and Improvement Cycles to enhance and expand programs and exhibits with focus on the five domains (social/emotional, cognitive, physical, language and learning how to learn)

**Accountability:** Education, Program and Exhibits Managers

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2016-2021

**Resources:** Education and Exhibits Committee, professional affiliations (ACM, NAEYC and ASTC)

**Cost:** Will be covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Increase in quality and effectiveness of programs and exhibits

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Utilize the Education and Exhibits Planning and Evaluation Tool to assess programs and exhibits. Twenty percent of offerings will be reviewed annually to support a five-year rotation.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed semi-annually by Education and Exhibits Committee and annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

#### GOAL 1 - STRATEGY 2

**Grow offerings of Exhibits and Programs that address unmet needs while supporting Museum sustainability**

**Action Step:** Research opportunities to make data driven decisions and plans

**Accountability:** Executive Director, Department Heads, Exhibits, Operations and Finance

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2019 – 2021

**Resources:** Education and Exhibits Committee, community partners, social service providers, professional affiliations (ACM, NAEYC and ASTC)

**Cost:** Will be covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Strategic Plans for development, implementation and evaluation of new offerings

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Creation of metrics that align with our mission, plan and outcomes

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Metrics validate the unmet needs and sustainability



## GOAL 1 - STRATEGY 3

### Increase opportunities for parents and caregivers to gain knowledge and skills

**Action Step:** Expand methods of sharing information through a variety of approaches such as workshops, events, programs and print, broadcast and social media

**Accountability:** Education, Communications and Program Managers

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2016-2021

**Resources:** Education and Exhibits Committee, community partners, social service providers, professional affiliations (ACM, NAEYC and ASTC)

**Cost:** Will be covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Parents and caregivers understand their vital role and are better equipped to support their child's learning and development

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Deliver at least one skill building offering per month. Evaluation methods may include surveys, data collection and/or observations.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed quarterly by Education and Program Managers and annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

## GOAL 1 - STRATEGY 4

### Create a culture of belonging and acceptance

**Action Step:** Increase awareness among board, staff and volunteers of the diverse needs of our community and apply new understandings to exhibits, programs and services

**Accountability:** Board and Museum Leadership Team

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2016; Phase II, 2016-2021

**Resources:** Education and Exhibits Committee, community partners, Visitor Services staff, demographic statistics and professional affiliations (ACM, NAEYC and ASTC)

**Cost:** Will be covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Museum community feels welcomed regardless of race, age, gender identity, physical ability, sexual orientation, family structure, citizenship or socioeconomic background

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Phase I: Collect existing community assessments, surveys and demographic information to determine needs and develop strategies. Phase II: Ongoing training. Respond to situations as they arise. Utilize information to provide training for board, staff and volunteers and to improve exhibit, program and service delivery.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed monthly by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board.

## GOAL 2

### GROW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

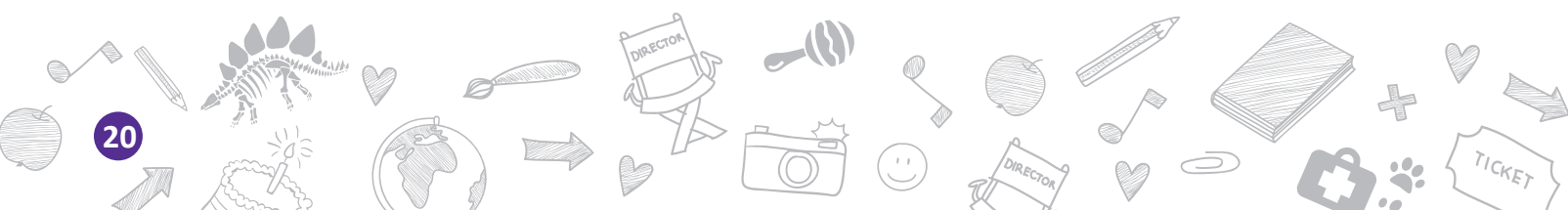
## GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 1

### Expand meaningful collaborations, partnerships and networks

**Action Step:** Evaluate existing relationships and explore opportunities to establish new community connections with businesses, educational institutions and other organizations

**Accountability:** Community Engagement, Education and Creative Arts Managers

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2016-2021



## **GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 1 *continued***

**Resources:** Existing partners

**Cost:** Covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Through ongoing community engagement the Museum becomes a stronger resource for children, families and the communities we serve

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Review and nurture existing beneficial relationships. Identify compatible groups for potential partnerships and collaborations. Pursue new opportunities to connect with compatible groups and individuals that align with community needs and the mission of Imagine.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

## **GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 2**

### **Raise awareness of Museum to the communities we serve**

**Action Step:** Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan that evolves with changing technologies, marketing methods and constituent needs

**Accountability:** Communications Manager

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2016; Phase II, 2017-2021

**Resources:** Marketing Committee, specialized consultants, volunteers

**Cost:** Determined during initial planning phase. Covered under annual operating budget or through grants

**Definition of Success:** Greater visibility and utilization of the Museum, exhibits, programs and services

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Phase I: Analyze current strategies to determine alignment with constituent needs. Phase II: Combine proven communication strategies with new and innovative approaches. Design a communication plan using this information and revise as necessary over time.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

## **GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 3**

### **Heighten understanding of the connection between play, learning and lifelong success**

**Action Step:** Enhance and expand methods of communication to share research, articles, pertinent information and real-life examples of the Museum's playful learning impacts on children and families

**Accountability:** Board, Executive Director, Museum Leadership Team

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2016-2021

**Resources:** Current fundraising events, community partners, professional affiliations (ACM, NAEYC)

**Cost:** Covered under annual operating budget

**Definition of Success:** Individuals, businesses, elected officials understand the power of play and champion the Museum's mission and importance to the community

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Design improved communication methods to reach individuals with the ability to advocate, influence decision making and affect change. Build relationships by engaging with strategically identified government, corporate and philanthropic groups.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

## **GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 4**

### **Expand volunteer and internship opportunities to help realize the Museum's mission**

**Action Step:** Strengthen the infrastructure to support effective, relevant and meaningful utilization of volunteers and interns

**Accountability:** Volunteer Manager

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2016; Phase II, 2017-2021

## **GOAL 2 - STRATEGY 4 *continued***

**Resources:** 501 Commons, professional affiliations (ACM, ASTC), Department Managers

**Cost:** Covered under the annual operating budget. Grant will be solicited for special projects

**Definition of Success:** Volunteer and internship programs are rewarding for both participants and the Museum.

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Phase I: Assess existing intern and volunteer programs. Identify areas of improvement. Phase II: Develop strategies and action steps to elevate these programs to more effectively meet participant and organization needs and aspirations.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed quarterly by Museum Leadership Team. Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

## **GOAL 3**

### **STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANIZATION FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **GOAL 3 - STRATEGY 1**

##### **Expand the facilities**

**Action Step:** #1 Complete fundraising to carry out and complete the Capital Expansion Plan. #2 Continue to research the best development options for transitioning Colby property into a Parking Garage

**Accountability:** Executive Director, Board, Special Committees and key staff

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2016; Phase II, 2017-2021

**Resources:** Board, volunteers, committees, community professionals, professional affiliations (AAM, ACM and ASTC), consultants as needed

**Cost:** Expenses for raising funds will be covered under sustainability funds

**Definition of Success:** Projects completed on time and within \$25M Capital Budget

**Measures to Ensure Success:** SMART Goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** #1 Ongoing progress reviewed monthly by Director, Finance Committee and Board.

#2 By 2021 a decision made and a plan in place.

#### **GOAL 3 - STRATEGY 2**

##### **Plan for mission driven sustainable evolution**

**Action Step:** Establish and implement formalized strategic plans in key areas including Technology, Finance, Fund Development, Education & Exhibits, Marketing, Volunteer, Facilities and Property

**Accountability:** Executive Director, Department Directors/Managers

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2016; Phase II, 2017-2021

**Resources:** Board, volunteers, committees, community professionals, professional affiliations (AAM, ACM and ASTC), consultants as needed

**Cost:** Costs will be covered under annual operating budget with excess cost from sustainability funds

**Definition of Success:** Strategic plans for the future will be realistic, viable and support sustainability

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Key area strategic plans will be aligned with the mission, vision and Strategic Institutional Plan. Phase I: Formalize plans and begin implementation. Phase II: Continue implementation and revise as necessary over time.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed monthly by Executive Director and Department Heads.

Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

### **GOAL 3 - STRATEGY 3**

#### **Build the Museum's accountability and credibility**

**Action Step:** Fulfill requirements to achieve and maintain American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accreditation, annual clean audits and annual Charity Navigator 4-star rating

**Accountability:** Board, Executive Director, key staff

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, 2015-2017; Phase II, 2017-2021

**Resources:** Staff, committees, professional affiliations (AAM, ACM and ASTC)

**Cost:** Costs will be covered under annual operating budget and our sustainability fund

**Definition of Success:** Refined infrastructure and increased institutional value, respect and credibility

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Phase I: Build upon practices and steps to achieve AAM accreditation, clean audits and Charity Navigator 4-star rating. Phase II: Ensure Museum standards put in place to maintain accreditation, clean audits and Charity Navigator 4-star rating become rooted in everything we do.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed monthly by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board during the accreditation process. Continued monitoring annually by Strategic Fulfillment Team and Board

### **GOAL 3 - STRATEGY 4**

#### **Grow fund development capabilities, relationships and revenue streams**

**Action Step:** Improve the fund development infrastructure, enhance and expand donor engagement and create planned giving and endowment programs under the leadership of an experienced Development Director, a new position for the Museum

**Accountability:** Board, Executive Director, Development Director

**Timeline:** Ongoing. Phase I, Spring of 2016; Phase II, 2016-2021

**Resources:** Board, staff, Finance Committee, professional affiliations (AAM, ACM and ASTC)

**Cost:** Personnel costs will be covered under annual operating budget. An M.J. Murdock Trust grant will cover three-year onboarding of Development Director.

**Definition of Success:** Improved systems that enhance and grow donations, grants and donor relations

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Phase I: Hiring of Development Director. Phase II: Implementation of planned giving and endowment programs. Infrastructure has the capacity to efficiently manage fund development operations. Giving continues to grow to ensure immediate and long-term viability.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed monthly by Finance Committee and Board

### **GOAL 3 - STRATEGY 5**

#### **Cultivate, develop and support organizational leadership that will allow the Museum to transition successfully into the future**

**Action Step:** Strengthen leadership skills of Board and key staff to navigate organizational change, take advantage of opportunities, ensure resiliency and excel through times of transition

**Accountability:** Board, Executive Director

**Timeline:** Ongoing. 2016-2021

**Resources:** Museum Strategic Fulfillment Team, professional affiliations (ACM), consultants

**Cost:** Cost to be covered under annual operating budget, sustainability fund and/or grant funding as deemed necessary

**Definition of Success:** The Museum continues to thrive as it moves through times of organizational change

**Measures to Ensure Success:** Strategic Institutional Plan is part of Board and Manager orientation. Department Operations Manuals are part of key staff trainings. Both documents are updated and reviewed annually. Needs assessment of Board and key staff will be conducted annually to determine training needs. Based on these results professional development opportunities will be offered. These offerings may include trainings, annual strategic planning, professional learning communities, classes and conferences.

**Evaluation Benchmarks:** Ongoing progress reviewed annually by Executive Director and Assistant Deputy Director

# Award Winning Museum

Imagine has been recognized both locally and nationally for exhibits and programs. We are the winner of many “best of” awards and featured on Evening Magazine and in 425 Magazine. Imagine is a two-time recipient of Thrive Washington’s “Discoveries from the Field” grant, which supports community-driven themes that expand the community’s understanding of early learning. In 2013 Imagine received the WA State LASER Award for advancing science education in innovative ways. Imagine was selected as one of 17 national science centers and children’s museums for a 2012 early learner’s project under the direction of “Science Beyond the Boundaries,” an international network of museum professionals that share ideas and inspiration. Data from the project will be compiled and published as a resource for other museums across the globe.

## Other Recognition:

### ★ Community Stewardship Award

*Snohomish County*

### ★ Science Education Advocacy Laser Award

*Washington State Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform*

### ★ Best Museum, Best Party Place, and Best Day Camp

*Nickelodeon’s Parents Connect*

### ★ Best Children’s Entertainment

*Voters of King 5 - Evening Magazine*

### ★ Outstanding Community Leadership Award

*Washington Association of School Administration, Region 109*

### ★ Wendt Award for Excellence in Cultural Arts

### ★ Promising Practice Award

*MetLife Foundation and Association of Children’s Museums*

### ★ Collaboration Award

*Snohomish County Human Services Council*

### ★ 5-Star Rating

*Lila Guide*

### ★ Hidden Gem

*Parentmap Magazine*

### ★ Best Museum for Kids

*Seattle Magazine*



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