



Bringing Language to Life

PLANET WORD • ANNUAL REPORT 2021
Museum of Language Arts



“Planet Word Museum is a magical place for people who love words, language, and reading.”

-VISITOR TO PLANET WORD



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The Bookend Society

“

Amazing! This exhibit was an interactive experience! As a lifelong lover of words, I am their target audience. Regardless, I do highly recommend this for everyone, especially curious kids. There are so many fun and interactive experiences throughout the museum, and they are made pertinent and interesting in today's world.

-VISITOR TO PLANET WORD

Photos in this report are courtesy of: DuHon Photography, Joseph Romeo, Irena Stein, and Les Talusan.

Report design by Eighty2degrees.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

VISION

To inspire a love of language and to increase literacy, the foundation of a strong modern democracy.

MISSION

Language is what makes us human. From earliest childhood we weave our words into speech to communicate. Yet the appreciation of words, language, and literacy is rapidly declining. At Planet Word, we inspire and renew a love of words, language, and reading through unique, immersive learning experiences for all ages and provide a space to explore words and language that is grounded in a solid understanding of language arts and science.

CORE VALUES

All of our exhibits and experiences share the following fundamental traits:

- fun
- playful
- unexpected
- motivational
- inclusive
- meaningful

Our commitment to promoting diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion is reflected in our content.

Undaunted

2021 was an exhilarating, confounding year of growth. Closed since late November of 2020 due to a Covid-19 surge in D.C., Planet Word reopened on April 1, believing the worst of the pandemic was behind us and that operations would begin to reach a steady state by the fourth quarter—achieving that state would help us plan for staffing, programming, and budgeting going forward.

But it wasn't to be. Concerns lingered about gathering inside; indoor events were still being canceled, or postponed, or regulated by the local government; students weren't yet back in classrooms, let alone going on field trips. Steady state would have to wait.

However, there were ample opportunities for Planet Word to grow its reputation, to increase the number of visitors, and to engage more classrooms. The board encouraged management—and me—to take a virtual approach to achieving our mission and enlarging our audience and supporters. We pivoted to offering programs online that might otherwise have been held in our auditorium. With programs presented in partnership with Shared Studios, for example, we offered the DIVERCITIES program series, which introduced listeners to artists using words in other parts of the world. Planet Word

was invited to present a program analyzing President Biden's inauguration speech as part of a national student tour company's Inauguration Watch Party—a digital event for middle and high school teachers and their students. We joined other organizations, such as the Freedom Forum and George Washington's Mount Vernon, in presenting content that day.

Through the development of Virtual Field Trips, we were able to reach classrooms with relevant, interactive content that tied into our gallery experiences. And with nonprofit partners in the literacy space, we were able to pursue our mission of supporting literacy, delivering books and programs to students and families in communities without access to relevant, appropriate books.

We added museum visitation days and hours and raised the cap on hourly registration to accommodate more visitors, because we saw that the demand existed and that visitors felt safe in our spacious, frequently cleaned, and well-ventilated galleries. We welcomed walk-up visitors who had started to discover downtown D.C. again. The reopening of the renovated Franklin Park in September made for additional neighborhood traffic and activity.

Our gift shop was popular, adding sales as visitor numbers increased, and saw lucrative pre-holiday business. The opening of Immigrant Food+ in October added a great opportunity for visitors to enjoy a meal before, during, or after their visit—with a menu that was perfectly aligned with a museum dedicated to words and language. Their tasty global cuisine matched the museum's multicultural linguistic flavor!

Positive coverage in the media brought more visitors to our doors, especially the CBS Sunday Morning segment that aired nationwide to some 5 million viewers on Aug. 15, 2021. For the rest of the year, we were delighted to welcome visitors from all across the U.S. who said they'd heard about us on CBS and had immediately added Planet Word to their travel itinerary. Fun radio and internet coverage also followed our nomination in the America's Best Restrooms contest, sponsored by Cintas, the uniform and cleaning supply company. We didn't win the contest, but we sure did win in the publicity category!

So by December we had welcomed over 60,000 visitors, reached over 4,000 students and welcomed over 4,000 virtual and in-person attendees for our events. We found we could

reach a much bigger, national audience and attract speakers who would never have been able or willing to travel to Washington. Thanks to our online reach, our audiences kept growing and growing, as did our community of word enthusiasts, and our name became more widely known. The momentum that our 2020 opening celebration catalyzed just kept building, despite the challenges posed by Covid-19.

Our predictions for 2022: that momentum will keep on growing!



Ann Friedman
Founder and CEO



Exhibits

Housed in the historic Franklin School at 13th & K streets in Northwest Washington, D.C., visitors enter Planet Word through the courtyard, where their experience begins beneath a spellbinding Speaking Willow created by renowned artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.



Third Floor Exhibits

THE ANN AND TOM FRIEDMAN GALLERY

Where Do Words Come From?

The Story of English

Our 22-foot-tall talking word wall explores the many forces that shaped the words we use today.

First Words

Discover how we learn language.



THE BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES GREAT HALL

The Spoken World

Languages Around the Globe

Meet speakers and signers from all over the world and let them introduce you to what's unique about their languages.

Second Floor Exhibits



Word Worlds

Setting the Scene

Dip your brush into *verdant*, *surreal*, or *luminous* and thrill as you transform the room around you with color, sound, and motion.

Joking Around

Words and Wit

Learn first-hand how words can create laughter by playing Don't Make Me Laugh.



THE DAN LOGAN GALLERY

Lend Me Your Ears

Public Speaking

Deliver a famous speech using a teleprompter and discover what made it unforgettable.

THE SCHWARZMAN FAMILY

Library

Enter a magical library where books come to life before your eyes and find the hidden door to the Poetry Nook.



THE PAUL SIMON GALLERY

Unlock the Music

Words, Rhythm, and Rhyme

Choose an iconic song to sing karaoke-style and learn the techniques that help songwriters put together lyrics and create a hit.

Paul Simon Visits the Paul Simon Gallery:

In December, we were thrilled to welcome singer-songwriter, musician, composer, and advisory board member Paul Simon. Of course, he had to check out the Paul Simon Unlock the Music gallery while he was there! He gave a couple of visitors the thrill of a lifetime when he joined in with them singing karaoke to "Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard."

First Floor Exhibits

I'm Sold!

Techniques of Persuasion

Learn how advertisers make their goods and causes stand out, and try writing an ad yourself.

THE DILLER-VON FURSTENBERG GALLERY

Words Matter

Telling Our Stories

Share your story in our fully equipped recording booth and listen to the stories of others who have felt the power of words.



“

As a Word Associate, I am able to help young visitors understand that words and reading can be just as fun as Roblox through the innovative experiences the museum has to offer. I also appreciate that, with the opening of the museum, Mrs. Friedman provided job opportunities during the pandemic to those whose vocation is Guest Services.

—CHARLES, WORD ASSOCIATE



“

This may be my favorite museum in D.C. Everything was so well put together. In every room, there was something that appealed to every age group. I loved it. The children loved it. We'll definitely be going back many times.

—VISITOR TO PLANET WORD

”



Planet Word's Impact

THOMSON SCHOOL VISITS

A block and a half from Planet Word's front door sits Thomson Elementary School. At the end of the 2020–2021 school year, when half of the school's student body was still learning virtually, Partnerships Coordinator Crystal Overstreet brought each grade to Planet Word. This experience was welcome after a hard school year.

The teaching techniques for digital learning are masterful. I learned from watching how to better structure a virtual lesson (and I was already pretty decent at it).

—EDUCATOR

EDUCATOR RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

2021 was the first complete year in which our Educator Resources were live on our website. During the year, the suite of 20 exhibit-related lessons was accessed 7,264 times. This could easily represent over 250,000 students served. The free lessons are Common Core-aligned, developed in collaboration with a council of local D.C.-area educators, and easily customizable.



IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

We began to host in-person programs for the first time in 2021. We welcomed D.C. Improv's lively pun competition, learned to swear with John McWhorter, participated in the opening of the redesigned Franklin Park, and threw ourselves a first birthday party. In December, the halls of Planet Word echoed with song as local carolers entertained our visitors.



LITERACY

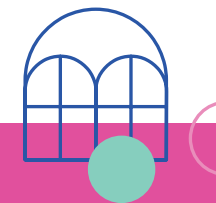
Planet Word has begun to serve as a literacy hub for organizations working to promote literacy in Washington, D.C. Already, we have been able to host tutor training sessions for The Literacy Lab, bookbag stuffing days for Everybody Wins DC, and a weekly afterschool program from One World Education.

“Este museo es completamente innovador, tecnológico, está muy bueno lo recomiendo...”

—VISITOR TO PLANET WORD

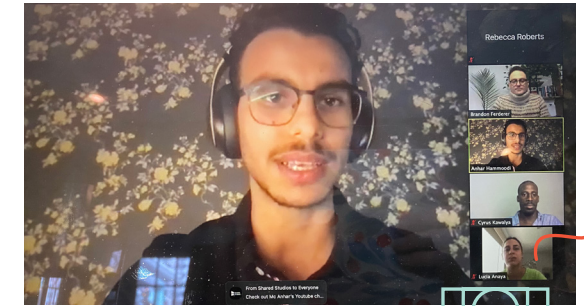
VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

In 2021, we offered a suite of three virtual field trips to bring Planet Word's magical approach to language arts learning to classrooms all over the country. Over the course of 2021, Planet Word educators delivered 117 virtual field trips to 3,582 students, aged 9–18, in 18 different states. In 2021, Planet Word also secured both a private grant from the Resnick Foundation as well as an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant to develop three new virtual field trips.



WORD ASSOCIATION

Planet Word is privileged to have a growing base of Word Association members from across the country who have priority access to programming and unique events. Members also enjoy discounts at our museum store, Present Perfect, and our new on-site restaurant, Immigrant Food+. As a new and free museum, Planet Word relies on support from our Word Association members.



VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Producing virtual programs has allowed us to host a broad range of speakers and reach audience members around the globe. We have discussed the language of fanaticism, why we need both numbers and names for numbers, and the surprisingly political history of the sociolect Rotwelsch. As of December 2021, over 4,000 participants had registered for our original programs. Highlights from 2021 include our DIVERCITIES series, produced in partnership with Shared Studios, which brought artists and writers from around the world together to discuss common interests.



Year in Review

PLANET WORD IN THE NEWS

The space itself is Disney World-levels of imaginative, with interactive elements like a recording booth you can use after practicing your speech writing and dreamy spots like a secret nook where you can listen to poetry.

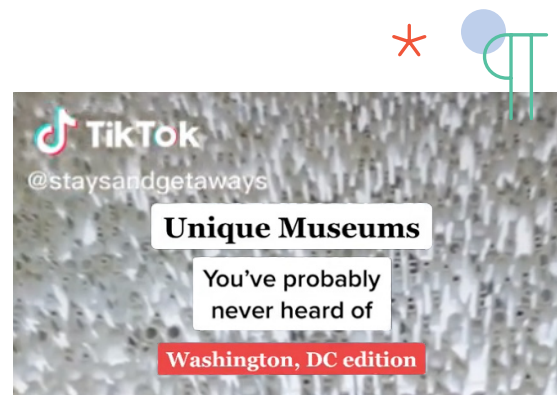
-CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER MAGAZINE
Second on the list of ten best museums in D.C.



Planet Word's restrooms were ranked among the top ten facilities in America in a competition sponsored by Cintas, the uniform and cleaning supply company. The restrooms are selected based on cleanliness, visual appeal, innovation, functionality, and unique design elements.

Correspondent Chip Reid toured the former school-turned-literary wonderland. Planet Word, Washington's newest museum, takes visitors on an immersive interactive trip through the fascinating world of words, language, and reading.

-CBS NEWS STORY



TikTok is a social-networking platform that has more than 850 million active users. Visitors to Planet Word have shared their experiences through video sharing. We're hearing from people as far away as China who report having learned about the museum on TikTok.

Inspiring all visitors about the power of language, reading, and words.

-CHIP REID, CBS CORRESPONDENT

COMMUNITY

We got our very own mission-aligned restaurant on the premises in October that received rave reviews. Immigrant Food+ opened on our lower level with a dinner menu created by award-winning chef Enrique Limardo.

If José Andrés has a friendly rival in Washington, it's Limardo. Take a look at his latest project, a third branch of Immigrant Food at Planet Word ... is the most ambitious yet, with an evening menu featuring top-shelf cocktails and table service as well as connections to Planet Word.

-TOM SIETSEMA, WASHINGTON POST, RESTAURANT CRITIC

EVENTS

We celebrated our one-year opening anniversary in October and welcomed over 60,000 visitors through the end of 2021.

We held our very first private wedding in our stunning event space.



The renovation of the historic Franklin School was the cornerstone of the revitalization of the downtown Franklin Park neighborhood, leading to the subsequent renovation of Franklin Park. The park, which is directly across the street from the museum, has been expanded and restored to include a fountain plaza, a new children's garden, conversational seating, and an engaging green space.



Words matter, and that has never been truer than when words of love were spoken for our first wedding proposal.

Board of Directors

Planet Word's governing Board of Directors includes leaders in education, media, real estate, technology, the arts, and museums. Board members also serve by contributing their advice and service through committees and ad hoc working groups. Their remarkable commitment to Planet Word is shown through gifts totaling over \$2.3 million.

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PLANET WORD

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PARTNERS, L.P.

Lynn Thoman

Adjunct Professor
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Advisory Board

The advisory board is a group of national and international scholars, linguists, and creative practitioners. Advisory board members help generate ideas and decide how people will experience the museum through different displays of language and communication.

Allen Adamson

Metaforce

Naomi S. Baron

American University

Lisa Bernstein

Doctrina Education Consulting

Adam Bradley

*University of California,
Los Angeles*

Cindy K. Chung

Principal Research Scientist

Linda Coleman

University of Maryland

David Crystal

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Stanford University

Guinevere Eden

Georgetown University

Michael Erard

Author and Linguist

Deborah Fallows

Author and Linguist

Ben Folds

*Singer-Songwriter, Composer,
and Multi-instrumentalist*

Regina Galasso

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Amherst*

Candace

**Kaleimamoowahinekapu
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Internet Linguist and Author

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New York Times

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David Yaun

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Ana Celia Zentella

University of California

Ben Zimmer

The Wall Street Journal

2021 Donors

We gratefully acknowledge those donors who made gifts, pledges, or pledge payments during the fiscal year 2021. Logophile Society members play an integral role in supporting the museum's mission—to inspire and renew a love of words, language, and reading. And thank you to the many visitors who made a donation when they registered to visit Planet Word!

\$1 million and Above

Bloomberg Philanthropies

\$500,000-\$999,999

Ann and John Doerr

Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman

\$250,000-\$499,999

Anonymous

Microsoft Corporation

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Anonymous

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Every effort has been made to create a complete and accurate list of contributors. Please call 202.918.6147 with questions or corrections.

Audited Financial Reports

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Year Ended December 31, 2021

REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
	2021	2020
Gifts, Grants, and Corporate Support	\$ 2,367,638	\$ 7,427,823
Facility use and Restaurant	181,885	N/A
Shop, Net of Cost of Goods Sold	96,401	6,176
Program Income	35,193	1,220
Contributed Goods and Services	239,202	127,067
Other	(1,715)	1,061
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 2,918,604	\$ 7,563,347
EXPENSES		
	2021	2020
Program Services	\$ 3,839,373	\$ 2,491,280
Management and General	486,045	295,206
Fundraising	158,410	174,266
Total Expenses	\$ 4,483,828	\$ 2,960,752
Change in Net Assets	(\$ 1,565,224)*	\$ 4,602,595
OTHER ITEMS		
	2021	2020
Extinguishment of Debt	\$133,100	N/A
Changes in Net Assets	(\$ 1,432,124)	\$ 4,602,595
Net Assets		
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 19,785,720	\$ 15,183,125
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 18,353,596	\$ 19,785,720

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2021

ASSETS		
	2021	2020
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,546,222	\$ 350,300
Contributions and Grants Receivable, Net	3,407,733	5,354,925
Other Assets	163,985	197,011
Exhibits, Fixtures and Equipment, Net	17,159,883	16,500,373
Total Assets	\$ 22,277,823	\$ 22,402,610
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
	2021	2020
Liabilities		
Line of Credit	\$ 3,150,000	\$ 2,000,000
Loan Payable	N/A	133,100
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	774,227	483,790
Total Liabilities	\$ 3,924,227	\$ 2,616,890
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$15,013,307	\$ 14,417,522
With Donor Restrictions	3,340,289	5,368,198
Total Net Assets	\$ 18,353,596	\$ 19,785,720
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 22,277,823	\$ 22,402,610

*Funds raised in 2020 in the amount of \$2,674,332 were released from time restriction in 2021 to cover planned operating expenses.



The Bookend Society

The Bookend Society is our newly named legacy society and was created to sustain the museum in the future. Reflecting the dictionary description for bookend – similar things that begin and end something and stabilize things – is exactly what we hope this new giving society will do! If you would like to learn more about including Planet Word in your will or estate plans, please call 202.918.6147 or email us at giving@planetwordmuseum.org.



Planet Word

Museum of Language Arts

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www.planetwordmuseum.org
support@planetwordmuseum.org
volunteer@planetwordmuseum.org
[@PlanetWordDC](https://twitter.com/PlanetWordDC)



Planet Word is a member of the D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative and the American Alliance of Museums.