



Arizona Museum for Youth

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## *News Release*

### Arizona Museum for Youth Tries a New Business Approach

Less than a year ago, the Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) was facing an uncertain future after the City of Mesa withdrew almost \$530,000 in funding due to budget constraints. In spite of this, the museum has moved forward, and after pursuing options to keep its doors open and exhibits fresh, Executive Director Sunnee Spencer says that the outlook is very hopeful.

Since July, more than 32,000 people have visited the museum and membership numbers have increased from 200 to over 1,000 families over the last three years. The museum was also named the “coolest surprise attraction in Arizona,” by guest contributor Tammi DeVan in the February 25 issue of *The Washington Post*.

Spencer believes that the museum’s future success depends on adapting a plan of action to insure that AMY continues to thrive as both a business and a valuable community resource. “Our organization’s growth depends on us taking a different business approach,” she says. “This includes expanding our exhibit offerings, increasing our fund-raising efforts, securing additional grants and developing a strategic sustainability plan.”

This goal is coming to fruition sooner than anticipated. Just this month, AMY received an \$85,000 foundation grant from The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to develop strategic and fundraising plans to increase the museum’s financial stability.

“The museum is to be congratulated for taking time to assess what are the key actions they need to take to build on their marvelous three years of achievement,” says Jim Copenhaver, a local museum consultant who will be helping with the strategic plan.

“The board and staff at AMY recognize that providing value to their community and its children requires building on success and not resting on it.”

The museum has already set the plan in motion by reconfiguring its Art Gallery space to offer more than six exhibits each year, instead of three. Other future plans call for creating a family comfort zone in the museum and continuing to be involved in the community and schools. Museum leaders also are employing technology to make visitors’ experiences more lasting.

What's next for AMY? A blockbuster traveling exhibition slated for mid-December could be a sign of what's ahead for this small niche museum. Stayed tuned for more information on the exhibit, as it promises to put the Arizona Museum for Youth on the national radar screen for years to come.

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*Located at 35 N. Robson in downtown Mesa, the Arizona Museum for Youth is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, 12 p.m. through 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for everyone 1 year of age and over. A place to introduce your family to art, this fine art museum for children and families hosts several changing exhibitions each year and features ArtVille, an art-town for kids under 4. As part of the exhibitions, a dynamic array of art classes, fun workshops and family programs are available to teach art principles and techniques. For more information, visit [www.arizonamuseumforyouth.com](http://www.arizonamuseumforyouth.com).*