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We are currently open noon to 4pm Saturdays & 2pm to 4pm Sundays | Open holidays & other times by appointment

Raven Hill Discovery Center, incorporated in 1991, is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.

Mission: Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

To: Friends of Raven Hill

From: Cheri

Date: February 4, 2023

Re: **Youth Innovation in Rural America**

In the fall of 2022, Michigan Humanities chose Raven Hill to host a Smithsonian **Museum on Main Street (MoMS)** traveling exhibit called **Spark! Places of Innovation** highlighting innovation in rural communities. The exhibit will be on display at Raven Hill from August 26 to October 7 of 2023.

In conjunction with the **Spark!** exhibit, the Center was also selected to participate in a Smithsonian project called **Youth Innovation in Rural America (YIRA)**. Raven Hill is working with **MoMS** and the **Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum** on this project and is one of only two sites chosen out of four states (Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky and Michigan) to partner with the Smithsonian on this project.



Raven Hill hosted the Smithsonian team for a pre-workshop dinner. Thanks, Café Sante, for a warm welcome to the area, after a rather harrowing drive from Traverse City in whiteout conditions!



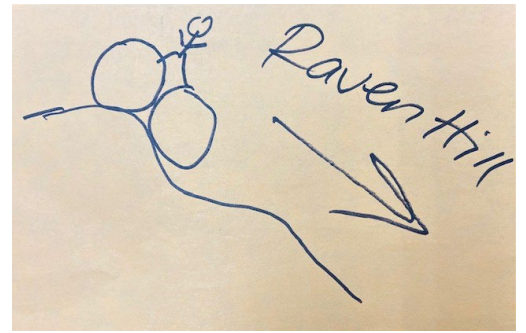
Brian Tremblay of Boyne City Middle School and Mary Brower of East Jordan Public Schools practice the interview process as a way of communicating with community members. **YIRA** participants can interview people to gain background information that will help them better understand user experiences and identify a community challenge.

The **goal** of **YIRA** is to encourage local youth to identify a challenge that their community faces and then work to find an innovative solution to that challenge. This weekend at Raven Hill Discovery Center, nine teachers from Char-Em ISD, representing Boyne City, East Jordan, Ellsworth, Harbor Springs and Petoskey, participated in a two-day professional development workshop with the **Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design** team. Teachers got hands-on, minds-on practice on how to use the design process to guide student innovation in their communities.

After the training, teachers will be asked to implement the design process in their classroom or with a group of students. The student innovation projects will take place between February and May 2023.

Participating students will learn about collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, empathy, communication, teamwork and many other innovation design skills. They will engage in meaningful conversations with the community, draw from the local culture and work to identify opportunities for positive change. Then, students will identify a specific community issue or challenge; use design process strategies to create a solution and document their work for presentation to the public on Saturday, May 6, 2023 at a celebratory program. The student displays will remain on display at Raven Hill Discovery Center through the end of **Spark!**

Participating teachers will guide students during the innovation design process; support students during their projects and help students detail their innovative solution with a display.



The challenge for all participants: draw two circles and incorporate them into an illustration of a “non-motorized” vehicle. Of course, there were all manner bicycles and skateboards, but Kim from Cooper Hewitt “drew” on her experiences here at the Center and came up with the idea of riding two snowballs down Raven Hill. What “non-motorized” vehicle would you draw?!



*Excitement filled the Great Room at Raven Hill as area teachers gathered for a unique opportunity to work on innovation design with New York City’s **Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum** educational team.*

Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a partnership between the **Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)** and state humanities councils, such as our own **Michigan Humanities**. It was created to serve museums, libraries and historical societies in rural areas, where one-fifth of all Americans live. **Cooper Hewitt** is America’s design museum. Inclusive, innovative and experimental, the museum’s dynamic exhibitions, education programs, master’s program, publications and online resources inspire, educate and empower people through design. Support for **Youth Innovation in Rural America** was provided by internal Smithsonian Institution funds from the Youth Access Grants. Thanks to local supporters, Café Sante and Boyne City Motel, for making the Smithsonian visit to northern Michigan an amazing experience!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the **Youth Innovation in Rural America** opening on May 6 and the kickoff for **Spark! Places of Innovation in Rural America** on August 26. What a great way to celebrate all the innovation that is happening right here in northern Lower Michigan.

Meanwhile, we encourage you to visit Raven Hill soon. We are open on Saturdays from noon to 4pm and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm. You can also call 231.536.3369 or email info@miravenhill.org for reservations during the week and on holidays.

Have a great week, everyone!

Cheri



From beginning to end, thank you Smithsonian—for sharing your talents and providing an awesome professional development experience for northern Michigan teachers. We can’t wait to get started on innovation design projects with our own students!