

# The Strong National Museum of Play 2021

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, The Strong remains committed to sharing the joy of play with local and national audiences. We broke ground on our 90,000-square-foot-expansion; increased attendance from 2020; added significantly to our collections and archives; launched new programs with national reach; and emphasized inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in the museum's activities. Learn about the many projects and programs you helped make possible at The Strong this year:

## MUSEUM EXPANSION AND CAMPAIGN

- Broke ground in April on a new 90,000-square-foot expansion—the centerpiece of the larger Neighborhood of Play
- Reached nearly \$52 million committed toward \$60 million campaign goal
- Received a \$5 million grant from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation to support the expansion, as well as an ongoing \$500,000 annual commitment for general operating expenses
- Announced ESL Federal Credit Union's \$1.5 million commitment to name the all-new 24,000-square-foot *Digital Worlds* gallery
- Raised more than \$400,000 at the museum's annual Play Ball gala—our most successful Play Ball to date!
- Received American Rescue Plan funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to add new positions to our collections team, including a Research Specialist for Black Play & Culture

## COLLECTIONS AND SCHOLARSHIP

- Surpassed more than 520,000 collection items
- Focused on adding items that reflect diversity and inclusion, including versions of Barbie as Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, and Maya Angelou
- Performed dozens of conservation treatments
- Published three issues of the *American Journal of Play*, including a special double issue on Blackness and Play

## ATTENDANCE AND PANDEMIC RESPONSE

- Safely served nearly 300,000 onsite guests (up from 175,000 in 2020), including free/reduced admission to tens of thousands of children and families in need
- Continued and expanded museum-wide safety and health protocols
- Hired 65 new team members, including filling some positions lost in 2020
- Recognized hometown health heroes and first responders with free admission nights
- Partnered with the Rochester Area Community Foundation and regional advocacy and educational groups to provide free museum admission and special programming for the local community on Juneteenth





## EXHIBITS AND PROGRAMS

- Opened *Skyline Climb*, a new high-adventure ropes course for guests to explore physical play
- Joined the WeGo Network, allowing pediatric patients to visit the museum virtually from their hospital beds
- Launched an updated and redesigned website at [museumofplay.org](http://museumofplay.org)
- Published three online exhibits, including *A History of Shindana Toys: Dolls and Games with a Difference*

## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

- Launched the National Archives of Game Show History to document the history of this playful television genre
- Created a research portal of materials from game designer Sid Sackson
- Surpassed more than 227,000 volumes in the library collection, including more than 55,000 trade catalogs from the doll, toy, and game industries
- Acquired the papers of influential play scholars Jerome and Dorothy Singer
- Added Women in Games Initiative materials from Joyce A. Weisbecker, Amelia (“Millie”) McCarthy, and Michealene Cristini Risley
- Preserved Id Software’s *Super Mario 3* computer game prototype discovered in The Learning Company records

## VIDEO GAMES

- Inducted *Animal Crossing*, *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, *StarCraft*, and *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* into the World Video Game Hall of Fame
- Acquired the Ralph Coppola Papers to document the contributions of Innovative Concepts in Entertainment to the coin-op industry
- Hosted an onsite and virtual *Women in Games: Gaming for All* celebration featuring Brenda Romero and Lisette Titre-Montgomery
- Hosted Black video game trailblazer and co-creator of the APF MP1000 console, Ed Smith, on *Game Saves from The Strong*

## TOYS

- Inducted American Girl Dolls, Risk, and sand into the National Toy Hall of Fame
- Collected more than 1,200 American Girl dolls and accessories, as well as hundreds of board games, action figures, and other toys
- Acquired key toys, games, and photographs to enhance the representation of diversity in toys and play through the years
- Celebrated Toy Industry Hall of Fame inductees from Steiff (Margarete Steiff), the Ohio Art Company (William Killgallon), and American Girl (Pleasant Rowland)