

A Letter from Our Director and CEO



The Family Museum

Through the spring of this year, we have been delighted with the success of the ROM's family programming and the extent to which families have embraced it. March Break attracted nearly 55,000 visitors, a 12 percent increase over the previous year.

Our programs have been as varied as our collections. At ROMKids weekends, children have met paleontologists, decoded ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic messages, celebrated Earth Weekend with us, and on Space Weekend held chunks of the moon and Mars in their hands. At ROM Saturday Morning Club, they challenged the Minotaur's Maze, painted masterpieces, built empires, and explored microscopic DNA, chemistry, physics, and meteorology.

ROM Sleepovers have been especially popular as young ROM aficionados discover the Museum by night. Other programs in high demand include ROM Summer Club, a success for more than 60 years, and programs for children up to four years of age. The New to Canada Youth Club (ages 13–16) offers eight Saturday afternoons that celebrate the Canadian cultural mosaic and provide an opportunity to practice English language skills in an international environment. The ROM Explorers Club (ages 4–11), available only to ROM Members, is the ultimate club for young museum goers.

The great family experience this summer is the ROM blockbuster exhibition *Ultimate Dinosaurs: Giants from Gondwana*, opening June 23. By about 150 million years ago, the world supercontinent of Pangaea had split into Laurasia (northern hemisphere) and Gondwana (southern hemisphere). On their separate landmasses, dinosaurs evolved differently. Although *Tyrannosaurus rex*

dominated northern latitudes, the even larger *Giganotosaurus* ruled the south. This colossus and other wonderfully unfamiliar prehistoric beasts from Gondwana will be unveiled at the ROM this summer as the Museum premieres this astonishing show. The interactive storytelling includes innovative iPad stations where dinosaurs are brought to life through Augmented Reality (AR). Grandparents take note—our new Senior Family membership admits the primary cardholder (age 65 or over) plus one adult and four children ages 17 or under.

A museum for all ages, we are always looking to create new events that cater to our audiences, and our Friday Nights Live @ROM (April 20 to June 22) are proving hugely popular with young Torontonians looking to party in spectacular surroundings and explore the galleries opened specially for them. Friday night revellers dance to the city's hottest DJs, presented by ElectriCity, and experience live performances, art installations, and late-night Museum talks by local artists, collectives, designers, and curators, with weekly themes ranging from fashion to music to photography, and more. And it's affordable—\$9 cover per person. Artisanal wines, beers, cocktails, and tantalizing fare begin at \$5. In view of the event's success, the party may be back in September. Watch for details.

As we continue to expand our attractions, we look forward to welcoming more and more individuals and families into the ROM family, as Members, and as frequent visitors to this unique social destination.

JANET CARDING
DIRECTOR AND CEO

Photo: George Whiteside



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