



# MSM Bellringer

VOL. 2, NO. 1

NEWSLETTER OF THE MCCORMICK SCHOOL MUSEUM

JAN/FEB 2024

## Progress Report – Winter 2023-2024

Building improvements are evident in and around McCormick School Museum, and exciting times are in the works for 2024. With the completion of several projects and the launching of new ones, we are eager to keep going! Here is a glimpse of what is happening on campus.

The cold, sunny days of January brought the construction crews to a pause in Project 1 of our building improvements that began in earnest last fall. The exterior limestone blocks of the 1890/1910 building have been cleaned, most of the cracked and broken stones have been replaced, and mortar joints have been re-pointed. As soon as the weather breaks, we will replace the decorative capstone above the main entrance and restore the former fire escape door on the north side to its original 1890 window configuration. Much of the security enhancements to both the exterior and interior of the facility are now in place and functioning well. We are on our way to a secure campus that is well-lit at night. The New Year has brought the next phase of our museum improvements. We are excited to announce the planned installation of an inclined platform lift in the stairwell of the 1930's building. This lift will make all floors of the building handicap accessible by wheelchair with relative ease. Project 1 should be completed by March.

Our next project will bring audio-visual enhancements to the multi-purpose room on the ground floor of the 1930's building which will allow professional presentations and musical events to be scheduled. An important and highly visible project will be the installation of a custom-made sign on McCormick Street advertising upcoming events to those passing by. Other planned improvements include cornice replacement on the west side and new paint on the woodwork of the limestone building.

Finally, the museum staff is anxiously awaiting the announcement of the most recent round of Kansas Heritage Trust Fund Grants to be awarded in February. Staff members successfully completed the grant application in October to provide funds for the restoration of the windows in the 1930's building. We are hoping for an affirmative announcement from the grant officials to begin the long-deferred maintenance to the exterior of this building.

We are excited and enthused to advance through our building enhancements at such an amazing rate. We hope you are catching our enthusiasm too, and will stop by and say HI! With the holidays and Kansas Day now behind us, we are still in a celebratory mood and want to share new festivities with you in an "old-fashioned" way. In this MSM Bellringer issue, you will find an Events section with information about our upcoming St. Patrick's Day Potato Bake Fundraiser. We would love to have you visit. Come by soon and see our progress!



In the foreground, a construction crew member is carefully fitting a limestone block into the opening above the window. In the background to the right, another crew member is shaping a limestone block with a stone saw. Photo: Cynthia Rhodes

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the McCormick School Museum is to showcase and protect its historical and architectural importance while telling the story of Wichita Public Schools through artifacts and archives.

The mission of the Advisory Council is to guide and assist in long-range planning, marketing, and development of the McCormick School Museum, seeking opportunities for growth and recognition through increased educational opportunities and significant fundraising efforts.

The Newsletter of the McCormick School Museum, Inc. is published six times per year to inform constituents of the Wichita Public Schools and other interested patrons of activities and events taking place at the museum. Contributions help us to produce this publication.

You may send your gift to  
McCormick School Museum, Inc. at:

McCormick School Museum, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12881  
Wichita, Kansas 67277  
savemccormick.com

## Recent Events at the Museum

The McCormick School Museum staff invited patrons and community members to celebrate the recent holiday season in an old-fashioned way. Over three hundred USD 259 music students from elementary and middle schools across the city sang carols and holiday songs in the main atrium of the 1890/1910 building on December 1. Parents and guests enjoyed the performances, and all were treated to cookies. Students were given tours of the building before leaving to return to their schools. It was a busy and merry day for all!

There were at least forty visitors during the Annual Holiday Open House weekend held December 2 and 3. The museum was decorated with ribbons and greenery with an eight-foot tall live fir Christmas tree purchased at Hong's Landscape and Nursery with just the right amount of GoFundMe donations. Decorated with popcorn strings and candles, the tree resembled the McCormick 2023 commemorative Christmas ornament (we have a few left if you would like to add to your collection).

On December 6, the Wichita Cultural Arts Forum held their monthly meeting in the multipurpose room at McCormick. Following the meeting, several forum members toured the building and made ringing the school bell a seasonal delight.

Holiday festivities culminated with the Sing Around the Tree event in the evening of December 14. Carol singers gathered around the Christmas tree as students used to do seventy years ago and gaily harmonized as our talented pianist, Tom Fleming, provided accompaniment on the museum's antique piano. During the intermission, guests toured the museum and were treated to cookies and hot spiced apply cider before singing their final holiday carols and happily departing for home.



A festive crowd gathered around the Christmas tree for an evening of carol singing on December 14, 2023. Photo: Dennis Duty

We held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kansas Day Chili Feed on January 27, bringing close to one-hundred people to the museum for a fun and delicious evening. With nine chili pots simmering, live entertainment, and a competitive Kansas trivia contest, all were treated to a rousing evening of good, old-fashioned FUN! Thank you to those who attended to support our museum.

A gay and festive time was had by young and old during these recent McCormick School Museum activities. If you missed the fun, you can follow upcoming museum events on Facebook. If you want to join the museum's e-blast list, call 316-708-0676 or email [cdavie@cox.net](mailto:cdavie@cox.net) to be included. Come and join us soon!

## EVENTS & MUSEUM HOURS

The McCormick School Museum is open Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and Sundays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Park to the north of the building; enter through door #4 (closest entrance to the parking lot). Ring the doorbell if needed. You may call 316-708-0676 to confirm museum hours before your visit or to schedule tours.

The Museum complex is located at 855 S. Martinson in Wichita. The facility is not handicap accessible at this time. Admission is by donation, your support is always appreciated.

### FEBRUARY 11, 2024

#### Love Bugs, 1 to 3 pm.

The Kansas Wildlife Exhibit, Riverside Citizens Association, and McCormick School Museum are celebrating some of the world's most unsung heroes at the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit in Central Riverside Park. They will showcase some of nature's most colorful creatures and serenade you about doodlebugs! There are Valentine's Day themed

crafts to make, insects to color, cookies to eat, and bugs to discover. Perfect for ages 1-101; visit early for the noon-day Feeding Time of the exhibit's larger animal ambassadors. Sponsored by Retreat to Joy.

### MARCH 16, 2024

#### Boiler-Made Potato Bake Fundraiser, 5 to 7 pm.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day and enjoy a large, deliciously-baked potato (freshly baked in the museum boiler) with all the fixings and green salad in this fun annual event. Live music is provided to complete this fundraiser. Suggested donation: \$10 for adults; \$5 for kids under 12. All ages are welcome. Check our social media sites for more information as we get closer to this event.

#### For more information and to contact the museum:

Website: [www.mccormickschoolmuseuminc.com](http://www.mccormickschoolmuseuminc.com)  
Facebook: McCormick School Museum  
Gmail: [mccormickschoolmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:mccormickschoolmuseum@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 316-708-0676 (call and text)