



September 16, 2014

BY HAND

The Honorable Juan C. Zapata
County Commissioner
Miami-Dade County
Stephen P. Clark Center, Second Floor
111 NW First Street
Miami, FL 33128

Re: An Appeal on Behalf of the Children of Miami-Dade County

Dear Commissioner Zapata:

As you certainly recall, the Board of County Commissioners in October 2009 adopted a policy of annually funding the Miami Children's Museum in a manner consistent with six other, major County-affiliated organizations: Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, the Historical Association (Museum) of Southern Florida, the Miami Art Museum (now Perez Art Museum Miami), the Miami Science Museum, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, and the Zoological Society of Florida (a group that has grown since then).

That policy decision established the level of funding for the Children's Museum at \$750,000 annually, which was re-affirmed by the County Commission when monies were actually appropriated in June 2010.

The mayor has recommended funding for the Museum in the 2014-15 budget at \$635,000. That is \$115,000 less than the amount determined to be appropriate by prior and successive County Commissions, and I am writing to respectfully urge you and your colleagues to restore funding for the Museum at the appropriate level.

Please remember:

The Museum is widely considered to be among the top children's museums of the world.

The Museum has hosted well more than two million visitors since its new facility opened on Watson Island . . . a facility funded in part by a \$5 million grant of CDT funds from the County in 2000.

More than 300,000 children and their families pass through the Museum's doors each year to experience educational and cultural

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Denise Glasser
Barbara Zolman

*Deceased

programming simply unavailable anywhere else in all of Miami-Dade County.

The Museum is a major tourist destination, welcoming more than 50,000 such visitors each year.

Enclosed for your convenience is a chart showing the appropriations to those six other organizations and the Children's Museum in that initial 2009-2010 budget year, as well as excerpts from the minutes of County Commission meetings on October 13, 2009 and June 3, 2010 when the funding policy and amount were established by majority vote.

Let me be extremely clear: I am not suggesting that any other organization's approved funding or recommended funding be touched on behalf of the Miami Children's Museum. To the contrary, I am urging a careful analysis of the County's resources in hope that our children will receive the very best educational and cultural experiences we can provide. They deserve no less.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff Berkowitz
President

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Lynda Bell, Vice Chair, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Barbara J. Jordan, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Jean Monestime, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Audrey M. Edmonson, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Sally A. Heyman, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Bruno A. Barreiro, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Xavier L. Suarez, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Dennis C. Moss, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Javier D. Souto, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Juan C. Zapata, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Member, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
Mr. Michael Spring, Senior Adviser, Office of the Mayor
Ms. Jennifer Moon, Director, Office of Management and Budget

County-Affiliated Major Cultural Organizations

ACTUAL 2009-2010 County Operating Support

	County Agency ?	Annual Attendance	S. Miami-Dade PAC CDT (a)	Recaptured Unspent CBO (b)	MCI/Other Grants (c)	Other CDT (d)	TOTAL	Subsidy \$\$\$/guest
Miami Art Museum of Dade County Association, Inc. (e)	No	62,000	\$346,000			\$1,351,000	\$1,697,000	\$ 27.37
Historical Association (Museum) of Southern Florida, Inc.	No	80,000	\$178,000		\$ 19,730	\$ 730,000	\$ 927,730	\$ 11.60
Museum of Science, Inc. (f)	No	150,000	\$414,000		\$ 76,969	\$ 894,000	\$1,384,969	\$ 9.23
Vizcaya Museum and Gardens	Yes	140,000	\$265,000		\$ 16,230	\$ 981,000	\$1,262,230	\$ 9.02
Miami Children's Museum, Inc. (g)	No	300,000		\$750,000	\$283,266		\$1,033,266	\$ 3.44
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Inc.	No	350,000	\$418,000		\$ 28,371		\$ 446,371	\$ 1.28
The Zoological Society of Florida	No	412,000	\$326,000				\$ 326,000	\$.79

Notes:

(a) Source: County manager's Supplemental Information for Second Budget Hearing memo, September 17, 2009, reprogrammed funds from unspent, prior-year South Miami-Dade Performing Arts Center (as named in memo; also known as South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center) operating budget appropriations.

(b) Policy approved as annual-subsidy amount by the Board of County Commissioners on October 13, 2009, with full funding appropriated by the Board of County Commissioners on June 3, 2010.

(c) Major Cultural Institution (MCI) amounts are grants awarded by the Department of Cultural Affairs via competitive process. The 22 MCI organizations and other groups competed for additional funding from the Department as it and the Tourist Development Council issued new grant opportunities periodically over the course of the budget year.

(d) Source: Proposed 2009-2010 budget document, Page 206, for Miami Art Museum, Museum of Science and Historical Association of Southern Florida, and Page 239 for Vizcaya Museum and Gardens. Amount for Miami Art Museum includes payment of \$192,000 County rent owed to General Services Administration. Amount for Historical Association (HistoryMiami) includes payment of \$187,000 County rent owed to General Services Administration. Museum of Science pays zero rent to General Services Administration.

Public CDT funds also will subsidize the Adrienne Arsht Performing Arts Center with \$12,829,000, and the American Airlines Arena with \$6,400,000.

(e) Miami-Dade has committed \$100 million in public funds for construction of a new, privately owned Miami Art Museum in the City of Miami's Bicentennial Park.

(f) Miami-Dade has committed \$175 million in public funds for construction of a new, privately owned Museum of Science in the City of Miami's Bicentennial Park.

(g) The Miami Children's Museum received a \$5 million CDT grant in 2000 toward construction of its new facility on Watson Island, creating its affiliation with Miami-Dade County.