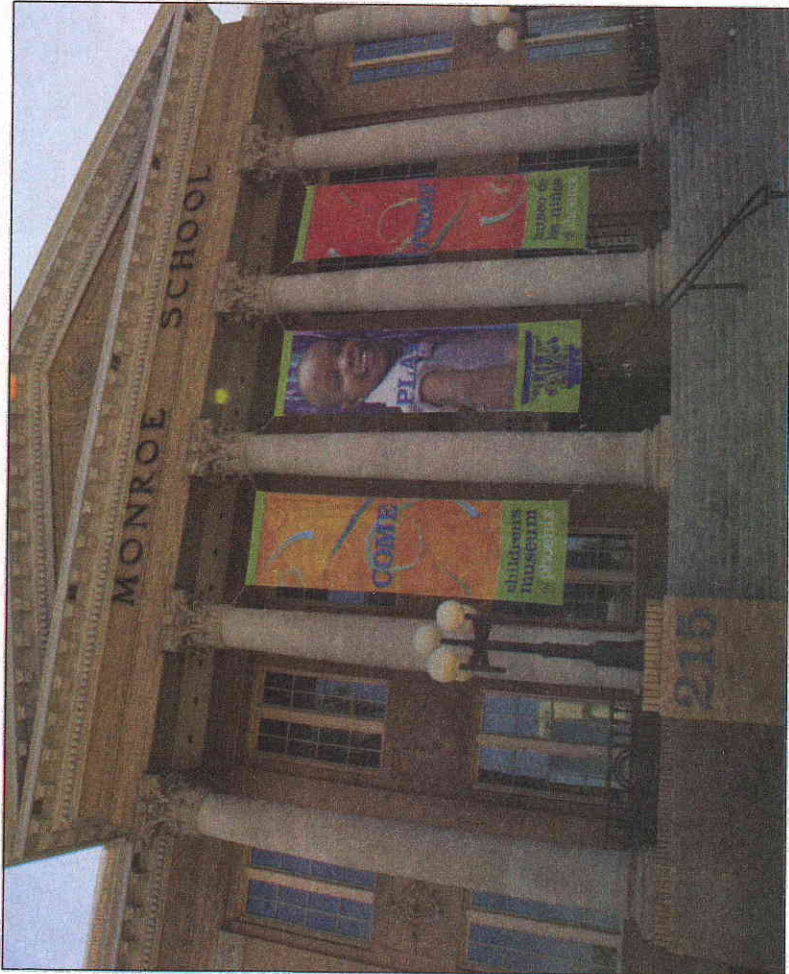


Project focus: Phoenix Children's Museum



The home of the new Phoenix Children's Museum was built in 1914.

Jayne Cook Electric Times

After years of setting up traveling exhibits as a nomadic "museum without walls", the Phoenix Children's Museum has acquired four walls of their own in a newly renovated, stationary building to call home. In June 2008, renovations of the former Monroe School, at 215 N. Seventh St., were completed and Phoenix Children's Museum took up residence.

"The museum is really all about play," said Deborah Gilpin, museum president and CEO. "Kids like to touch things, put their bodies on it, experience things in an open-ended way, where there's really not just one answer. We're designed for children age zero to 10 and the idea was to pick really great,

fun stuff that kids love to do and then enrich it with all the different developmental skills."

The \$22.8 million project received funding through grants from various individuals and agencies and bonds approved by voters in 2001. But the museum held hopes of fundraising \$12.3 million through a campaign co-chaired by Phoenix Suns owner Robert Sarver and Suns Chairman Jerry Colangelo. When the doors opened, the museum was still short approximately \$0.5 million, leaving a substantial amount of museum space 'mothballed.'

"Opening a museum is either time or money," said Gilpin. "We could either wait longer and try to raise more money or we could get open, get serving people and raise the money later. It's still a big museum,

though, and we know we have that extra space if we want to expand."

The building itself was built in 1914, making the electric and venting work required extensive. "We had to re-do the entire electrical system and basically start over," said Jen Electric Project Manager Sean Goneau. "The whole job took about 12 months with an average crew of eight to ten. We were on a compressed schedule but things came together and we cranked it up as the deadline neared."

Tom Emanuelson, project manager for Midstate Mechanical agreed that working on a building that old can be challenging but you just do the job and everything comes together in the end.

Despite the shortage of funding and the expansive technical work required on the three-story structure, the Phoenix Children's Museum was finished on schedule and now welcomes visitors into their new home.

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