

(C) How to create educational programming for your exhibition.

This might seem like the scariest part of your participation in the YOURSTUFF MUSEUM. In our opinion it is the easiest and you should feel free to be as creative as you want to be. Simply put, you are only being asked to tell the story of YOURSTUFF through a type of show-and-tell. Since you have all your stuff on display, we wanted to encourage you to also tell us about it. We may not think about it this way, but when we talk to another person—when we tell them something that perhaps they didn't know—we are teaching them something. The same thing happens when someone does that to us. It might seem wrong to reduce learning to such a rudimentary human behavior as conversation but the truth is that it is even more basic. You could merely point at something and if someone else turns to look at it—even momentarily—you are teaching!

So that is what we mean when we say “educational programming”. Can you find a way to point our attention—through your stuff—in the direction of something that we may have never heard before or (more importantly) may have never heard it the way you're saying it to us?

Some ways that you might consider doing this is by giving a scheduled tour of your YOURSTUFF EXHIBITION. What would it be like for you to pull out your stuff and tell us the stories associated with it? Maybe you could do it slightly more formally and present a lecture. Let's say you were showing us your collection of personal cups and mugs; maybe you could show images that go hand-in-hand with the cups you're showing. You could say, “this is a mug my son brought me when he visited a beignet café in New Orleans and here is a picture of my son, and here is a picture of the café, and here is a picture of a map of Louisiana, and here is a picture of a family trip we always used to take”. You could even take it one step further and hold a workshop where you show everyone how to make beignets and—more deliciously—how to eat them! You may be saying, “this sounds too simple! Every time I go to the museum the educational programming is so complex and involved. I don't have the expertise.” First of all, go back and read handout (A) on curation and expertise. This sense of not knowing enough is only true in appearance because all you need to do is examine your life and think about all the things that were taught to you by so-called non-experts and all things you've taught simply by relaying your experiences to others. We're teachers as much as we are learners! This is really all we're asking for: tell the story of your stuff in a way that feels in line with the way you would tell it to one of your kids who really, really, wanted to know. We really, really want to know!

Ultimately it is not our intention to let you fly completely solo on this, although we thoroughly believe in your capacity to do it. If you need any assistance in brainstorming how to do it please feel free to contact us. This really is the heart of the YOURSTUFF MUSEUM.

Don't forget to invite your friends and family and to tell us when you're doing it so we can invite our friends and family to your educational programming.