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Outreach Program — *Investigating Where We Live*

Overview

Created by the National Building Museum in 1996, *Investigating Where We Live* is a summer Outreach Program designed for middle school and high school students from the DC metropolitan area. *IWWL* participants learn to use creative writing and photography as a means of understanding and describing DC neighborhoods. At the end of the program, participants have an opportunity to show what they have learned by creating a museum exhibition that features their insights and work.

Program Goals

In *IWWL*, participants will:

- | Develop photography, writing, and design skills
- | Define neighborhoods and examine what influences their appearances
- | Learn neighborhood histories
- | Collaborate with peers and staff as part of a team
- | Create a museum exhibition

In addition to developing these skills, *IWWL* students enjoy a number of additional benefits. In return for their commitment to the program, participants:

- | Receive a digital camera
- | Develop relationships with professional photographers, designers, museum staff, and fellow participants
- | Keep photographs for use in future projects, portfolios, or high school and college applications
- | Fulfill community service requirements for school



How does the program work?

Investigating Where We Live is a ten-session summer program that takes place from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays for five weeks. Up to 30 participants are selected each summer.

At the beginning of the program, participants are given an overview of photography before being assigned to three teams. Next, in a series of site visits, each team investigates one of three neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. Documenting its landmarks, major thoroughfares, and commercial and residential areas through digital photographs and writings, participants work to gather information about the community's history and identity. Participants spend the rest of the summer assembling this information to create a Museum exhibition of their own design. This exhibition, which is displayed in one of the Museum's galleries, showcases student photographs, poems, and narratives, and offers their fresh interpretations of the unique character of the city's communities.

All participants use a digital camera to document the neighborhoods during their trips in the field. Upon successful completion of the program students keep these cameras for personal use, and may also keep any photos they produce.

**How can I get involved?**

This summer's *Investigating Where We Live* will take place every Tuesday and Thursday from July through August 8. The gallery exhibition will be open to the public beginning on August 18th following an evening reception.

Apply to participate

If you like taking photographs or have a special interest in creative writing, complete an [application to participate in IWWL](#) this summer.

Volunteer

The Museum seeks professionals and students in the fields of photography, design, architecture, urban planning, creative writing, and education to share their expertise with our participants. Volunteers may receive college credits or professional development points for their time. Please [here for an instructor application](#).

Contact

For more information, please contact the Assistant Outreach Programs Coordinator at (202) 272-ext. 3301, or email iwwl@nbm.org.

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