For immediate release

**Staten Island Museum ramps up for expansion, welcomes new staff members**

(Staten Island, New York – March 2012) The **Staten Island Museum**, which sits overlooking the Staten Island Ferry terminal in New York City’s greenest borough, is celebrating its 130th year by planning and preparing for its second substantial growth spurt in the past 100 years, and to do that it has brought on some new talent.

“Our small core staff has been committed and tireless— but to facilitate the expansion into buildings at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center by 2014, work with local communities, and collaborate with partners, we have hired the enthusiastic and capable new team members in the past two years”, explains Diane Matyas, Director of Programs & Exhibitions. “We are galloping – and stopping to acknowledge new staff at this auspicious time is important. After all, the exhibits, object care, planning, teaching, and fundraising does not happen without them. The energy and outstanding staff are making our future opening a reality.” They include:

**Robert Bunkin, Curator of Art**

![Robert Bunkin](image)

Mr. Bunkin has taken on the task of looking at the collection of art objects that range from Ancient Egyptian to Contemporary times. He is reaching out to special guest curators and outlining the **Opening Treasure Box** exhibitions for the new building. Of particular interest to Bunkin is the proposed **Staten Island Seen** exhibition - which will interweave the Museum’s impressive 19th and 20th century landscape paintings of the area with contemporary artists’ interpretations of this historic and varied boroughs’ vistas and realities.

Bunkin, a well-regarded New York painter, art history professor, and art studio instructor, is enjoying the challenge and adventure of looking into a collection which has been relatively unexplored by the public.

“Working here is like opening gifts every day. I’m always discovering some treasure from such a breadth of eras and cultures. I look forward to sharing these gifts with fellow art lovers from Staten Island, the New York City area and abroad. I’m hoping that these exhibitions will also produce new art lovers.”

Bunkin earned his BS from the CUNY BA/BS program and his MFA at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. He studied fresco painting at Leonetto Tintori’s Laboratory for True Fresco in Vainella, Italy.
Claire Aniela Arthurs, Manager of Education

Ms. Arthurs comes to the Museum with a plethora of experience and energy. She received her Bachelor of Science from Antioch College in Ecology and Biology with focus in zoology. Ms. Arthurs most recently ran environmental programming at Clay Pit Pond State Park Preserve’s Nature Center, an organization intrinsic to the Staten Island Museum, sharing values instilled in us by our founders who were environmentalists and natural history leaders key to our mission and relevant to both the art and history departments.

Arthurs has expertise in creating and evaluating visitor centered displays and teaching conservation and extinction theory. She has taken coursework in Museum Education and Adolescent Teaching at Bank Street College.

“I am the people’s science educator. My background is field biology because I like making science accessible to anyone. While my peers were discussing chaos theory and black holes, I wanted to tell the person on the street ‘You see that crow? It’s really smart.’ That’s what makes the field of Museum Education so engaging and satisfying. I’m committed to providing inquiry-based investigation to all types of learners.”

Michael Dressler, Senior Registrar & Collections Manager

Mr. Dressler arrived to Staten Island from the University of Alabama Museums where he was Collections Assistant for four years. Previously, he interned at the Adams County Historical Society in Gettysburg, PA. Mr. Dressler received his M.A. in Applied History from Shippensburg University, and he received his B.A. in History from the University of South Carolina.

“His experience in Natural Science, Archeology, History collections, and comfort with digital registration systems are a boon to a museum like ours” explains Ms. Matyas. “The on-going collections paperwork and the overall safety and care of the collection is Michael’s responsibility. Moving forward in digital information methods is critical to our ability to access and organize the millions of objects in our care.”

Cara Dellatte, Archivist

Ms. Dellatte, a native Staten Islander, was recently promoted to Archivist after completing a degree in Library Science with a certificate in Archival Studies from Queens College. Prior to her promotion, Ms. Dellatte served as an intern at the Museum and has worked three years as the Museum’s Assistant Archivist. Ms. Dellatte has shown her mettle in assisting researchers and as an advocate for the thousands of objects in the History Collection including historical documents, maps, objects, and ephemera. Cara is the key to exploring Staten Island’s history at our Archive space at Snug Harbor Building H.
Renée Bushelle, Manager of Visitor Services

Ms. Bushelle is our arbiter of welcoming and providing our visitors with an outstanding experience. Since her arrival the Museum Renée has garnered uncounted positive responses from our members and visitors. Her acumen and professionalism has been felt throughout the Museum, and by the team of new volunteers she has assembled.

Ms. Bushelle's professional experience includes the position of Business Associate at Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden where she coordinated education, tour, membership and volunteer activities; the Staten Island YMCA where she supported afterschool programming, and continues to serve the organization as a fitness instructor. She has also worked for The Bridge Fund of New York Inc., a homelessness prevention program and began her career in the non-profit sector in the Development department of the Hudson Guild, one of New York City’s oldest settlement houses.

Ms. Bushelle received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Cultural Anthropology and International Studies from The City College of New York, in New York City.

Jeannine Otis, Community Outreach Associate

Ms. Otis, who has been passionately involved in educational outreach for several decades, joined the Museum to spread the good news and make sure that our local Staten Island Community knows that this is THEIR MUSEUM – and as such we want them to visit, add to our collections, and enjoy our programs and events.

Highlights of Ms. Otis’ career include extensive work in the UK with ‘at-risk’ youth, the Creative Arts Team, formerly of New York University, Marymount College, the Actor’s Fund, the Los Angeles Public School System, the Baccalaureate school in Austria and Japan, as well as locally at Lincoln Center. She has also worked with Just for Children (outdoors programming with Safari East), as an evaluator for the DCA’S art outreach program for children living in temporary housing. Jeannine also works outreach through the National and International Anglican/Episcopal Church. This has come about because of her affiliation as Music Director at Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church in the Bowery which has historically been a place for artists to combine their work with spirituality.

She is the first African-American to receive the distinction of Presser Music Scholarship upon graduation from Wellesley College (BA), an honors graduate program in arts-in-education of a fellowship program at Emerson College, and a recipient of COAHSI's Lifetime achievement award as a vocalist, scholar, and arts administrator.

About the Staten Island Museum’s Expansion

In addition to its original building located just two blocks from the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, the Staten Island Museum is operating its Art Conservation Studio and the Staten Island History Center &
Archives at Snug Harbor Cultural Center, an 83-acre campus of landmark Greek Revival buildings, joining other cultural institutions at the site. The Museum is transforming itself from the 19th Century model of a museum as a “cabinet of curiosities,” into a fully realized 21st Century institution that is accessible, diverse, technologically advanced, and demonstrates leadership in collections management, exhibitions, education and public programming. Once the mainly City-funded ($25 million) renovation of Building A (originally built as a dormitory in 1879) is complete in spring of 2014, the Museum will add over 18,000 square feet (10,000 sq. ft. for the public), with additional space to follow in Building B three to four years later.

High Resolution Images available upon request.

###

**About the Staten Island Museum**

Founded in 1881 and celebrating its 130th year, the Staten Island Museum, New York City’s only general interest museum, engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions and educational programs that explore the dynamic connections between natural science, art and history based on its diverse collections. The Museum welcomes about 80,000 adults and school children to a comprehensive array of programs every year. Located two blocks from the Ferry Terminal, visitors can embark on a voyage through time in the Staten Island Ferry exhibit; see rocks glow in the dark in the Hall of Natural Sciences; and experience the lives of Staten Island's first inhabitants. In Building H on the Snug Harbor Campus, visitors can explore the latest exhibitions in the History Center Gallery, or make a research appointment for the History Archives & Library. Staten Island Museum is owned by the City of New York and benefits from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. For current exhibitions, visit Statenislandmuseum.org.

---

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

**Staten Island Museum (St. George)**
75 Stuyvesant Pl., SI, NY 10301

**Hours:**
Monday - Friday: 11am– 5pm  
Saturday: 10am–5pm  
Sunday: 12pm-5pm

**Universal Accessibility**

**Recommended Admission**
Adults $3.  
Students andSeniors: $2.  
FREE to members and children under 12.

**History Center & Archives *New Location***
1000 Richmond Terrace, Snug Harbor Campus, Building H, Staten Island, NY 10301

**Hours:**
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 10am – 4pm by appointment only.  
Contact Cara Dellatte at 718.483.7122.

**History Gallery Hours:**
Tuesday – Friday: 1pm – 4pm
 Free Admission