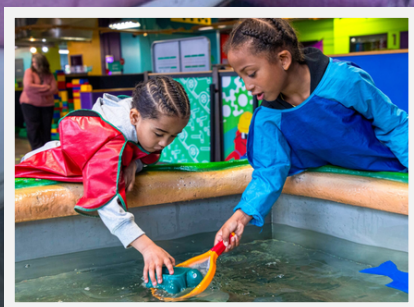


ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCESSM

COMMUNITY AS THE CLASSROOM

Program Overview & Brand Guidelines



LEARN MORE AT:
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ABOUT ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCESSM



Essential ExperiencesSM is a multi-year funded initiative from GAR Foundation that provides PreK through fifth grade Akron Public Schools scholars with custom-designed educational programs that align directly with classroom learning. These experiences deepen scholars' connections to the community, foster critical thinking through inquiry-based activities, and allow them to gain valuable exposure to career possibilities.

Essential ExperiencesSM provides scholars with meaningful, high-quality co-curricular field studies designed to inspire curiosity and the joy of learning. Each experience has been thoughtfully curated with specific learning objectives aligned to Ohio's age- and grade-appropriate learning standards, ensuring that scholars not only enjoy these adventures but also engage in educational opportunities that reinforce classroom instruction. By partnering with arts and culture organizations across greater Akron, Essential ExperiencesSM opens a world of discovery for APS scholars, connecting them to the region's rich cultural assets and fostering lifelong learning.

Entering its seventh year and the beginning of Phase 3, Essential ExperiencesSM is a proven model of collaboration and innovation, transforming the educational landscape for thousands of APS scholars while also enhancing each host organization. For scholars, these experiences go beyond classroom learning, sparking critical thinking, creativity, and an awareness of diverse career possibilities. For host organizations, the program has provided an opportunity to refine and expand how they engage with a diverse audience of young learners, improving their impact on the community. This transformative initiative not only equips scholars with tools for academic and personal growth, but also fosters a deep, enduring connection to greater Akron's vibrant arts and culture landscape—planting the seeds for future civic engagement and community pride.

9,000+

APS scholars immersed in seven local arts & culture organizations annually

30,000+

Hours of direct engagement between APS scholars and host organizations each school year

600

APS classrooms that participate in programming each school year

LEARN MORE AT:
[GARFOUNDATION.ORG/EE](https://garfoundation.org/ee)

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HOST ORGANIZATIONS

All APS PreK-5th grade scholars visit one of seven local arts and culture organizations each year to engage in grade-specific educational programs that align directly with classroom learning. These custom-designed experiences deepen scholars' connections to the community, foster critical thinking through inquiry-based activities, and allow them to gain valuable exposure career possibilities.



ArtSparks | PreK

"Ready, Spark, Kindergarten" is a 15-week music program by ArtSparks that joyfully fosters kindergarten readiness skills through rhyming and dance. All PreK scholars meet with an instructor weekly inside their classroom. This experience culminates in an energetic live showcase with parent and community audiences.



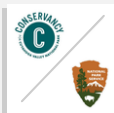
Akron Children's Museum | Kindergarten

"Explore Galore with Monsters and More!" allows kindergarten scholars to spend the day on-site at the Akron Children's Museum predicting, estimating, counting, sorting, and more through playful discovery and problem-solving.



Akron Zoo | First Grade

In this two-part "Animal Encounters" experience with the Akron Zoo, all scholars participate in a guided tour of the Zoo where scholars observe habitats and identify how those habitats support living things. In part two, the Akron Zoo's ZooMobile visits scholars in their classrooms where they will interact with animals to understand what living things need to survive.



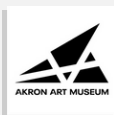
Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center | Second Grade

Scholars spend the day as "Junior Rangers: Ecosystem Explorers!" in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, exploring the natural world around them where they practice observation skills, investigate a pond and forest ecosystem, and "think like a scientist" through exploration activities centered around making observations, asking questions, and making personal connections.



Weathervane Playhouse | Third Grade

Scholars explore how creativity and polymers come together to create powerful storytelling experiences on stage - through props, lighting, movement, costumes, wigs, make-up, and more. Engaging interactive sessions allow scholars to step into the spotlight and go behind-the-scenes as they see what it takes to bring a story to life in a theatrical production.



Akron Art Museum | Fourth Grade

Each fourth grade scholar visits the Akron Art Museum to discover the role of "Artist as Inventor." Scholars become both artists and inventors, as they find new ways of seeing the world, new ways of using materials, and new ways of solving problems through both a gallery and studio experience.



Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens | Fifth Grade

Fifth grade scholars advance their history skills by visiting Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens and experiencing "Akron: City of Opportunity" from the organization's past by exploring the trades, crafts, and careers of 1920s immigrant or migrant workers. Scholars then apply their knowledge to modern-day Akron opportunities.

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PARTNER TOOLKIT

The toolkit is designed to support Essential ExperiencesSM partners in sharing and promoting their involvement in the program. It provides access to messaging guidance, program-related photos, graphics, and other resources to help you communicate the value of turning our community into a classroom for Akron's youngest learners.

[Access the Toolkit](#)

WRITTEN & SPOKEN REFERENCES

Use this language in your written and spoken communications as needed. Please share any communications with GAR Foundation communications staff before publishing content publicly.

Service Mark

Essential ExperiencesSM should always be displayed with the official service mark (SM).

Don't Drop the 'S'

The initiative is called Essential ExperiencesSM, not Essential Experience or My Essential Experience.

Usage

Host organizations may refer to themselves as an Essential ExperiencesSM host **ONLY** in the context of the program.

Tagline

The official tagline of the initiative is "*Community as the Classroom.*" Please do not alter or modify this tagline.

Field Studies

Refer to the experiences as field studies or learning experiences, rather than field trips.

GAR Foundation Reference

Written reference should appear as 'GAR Foundation.' Spoken should be spelled out, as in "Gee-A-Are" and not referred to as "gar."

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCESSM

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FIELD STUDIES

How Essential ExperiencesSM differs from traditional field trips. Use this language in your communications as needed.

Inquiry and Curriculum-Based

Essential ExperiencesSM are designed by professional educators to connect directly to the content being taught and learned in scholars' own classrooms.

Guaranteed

Essential ExperiencesSM ensures that every child in every participating grade level gets to have the same valuable experience.

Consistent

Essential ExperiencesSM provides scholars with a consistent, hands-on, grade-appropriate experience to support their learning each year.

Future Focused

Scholars are exposed to different careers in each experience, allowing them to imagine what's possible and to see themselves in these future careers.

CONTACT

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