



ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

For Immediate Release:

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Thousands of School Children Tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Since May

Museum takes learning beyond the textbook teaching 19th century lessons with 21st century technology

SPRINGFIELD, IL: The procession of yellow school buses is unending. Since May, they have brought over 6,000 Illinois students to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM). Even greater numbers of school groups are scheduled to visit between now and December. The 6,000 students are a part of more than 370,000 visitors to the museum since its opening.

"At its heart, the Museum is a classroom, even if students and teachers find it to be a decidedly unconventional one," said Richard Norton Smith, Executive Director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Like any good teacher, we aren't content to just pass on information, as important as that is. We want to inspire our young visitors to go on learning about Lincoln and his legacy long after they leave the corner of Sixth and Jefferson."

Schools that have made the trip to the ALPLM include: Luther South Jr. High School, Decatur Christian School, Mt. Olive High School, Calvary School, Aurora, and St. Gerald School, Oak Lawn. Out-of-state schools include: Perry Christian Academy, Perry, Mo., and Salem Grade School, Salem, WI.

The ALPLM was designed to create exciting learning experiences for children who have grown up learning through computers and video technology. Because of the innovative ways that history is shown throughout the Museum the lessons of history have come alive for thousands of children.

"The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum is a great teaching and learning resource for students and teachers throughout the state," said Randy Dunn, State Superintendent of Education. "Through the use of 21st century technology at the Museum students are literally surrounded by the people, places and events of one of the most important periods of our nation's history. The Museum's teaching opportunities brings the legacy of Lincoln to life and shows students how our future is built on the actions of the past. After a few hours at the Museum the students know more, and most importantly, they are curious to learn even more."

At the ALPLM, students walk through exhibits that recreate Lincoln's life using animated figures and sounds. They see Lincoln as a young boy reading by firelight and as a man in the telegraphic office waiting for news of the war. They move on to the Lincoln era White House and then watch as a high tech map of the United States displays a daily count of the fatalities of the Civil War.

Among the Museum's most popular attractions for students and teachers have been the multimedia presentations "Lincoln's Eyes" and "Ghosts of the Library". In these presentations, smoke effects, lights, slides, film elements, vibrating seats and animatronics figures create a breathtaking show.

Among all the high tech features of the museum are historical artifacts, which include an original copy of the Gettysburg Address. The ALPLM includes 40,000 square feet of permanent exhibit space, which is twice the size of any other presidential museum and houses the world's largest collection of Lincoln documents.

Research shows that museum tours can show children real examples of things they've learned from textbooks, appeal to different learning styles, humanize history and even encourage students to become historians.

The lessons learned at the Museum support the Illinois Learning standards, which include a goal that all children understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations. The standards state that students who can examine and analyze the events of the past have a powerful tool for understanding the events of today and the future. They develop an understanding of how people, nations, actions and interactions have led to today's realities. In the process, they can better define their own roles as participants in their school, community, state, nation and world.

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