Mission Statement

To open a museum that employs special ability adults and enriches their quality of life with creativity and togetherness.

Overview

The Vintage Purse Museum, NFP is not only a repository of fashion, design, history and art; it is also a space for public engagement, education, and cultural exchange as a more diverse family-oriented attraction with exhibits including Comic Books, Barbie, Wedding, Antique Toys, Service Story, Art Gallery and a Bean-to-Cup Coffee Bar and Gift Shop. This level of engagement fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion, contributing directly to the educational and cultural enrichment of the community.

Company Facts:

About the Building

The building at 3 Diversatech Drive in Manteno, Illinois, was originally constructed in 1928 as part of the administrative complex for the Manteno State Hospital. This hospital, which officially opened in 1930, was one of the largest mental health facilities in the United States during its peak, with a campus that included various self-sustaining amenities such as farms, utilities, and even its own police force. After the hospital's closure in 1985, many of the hospital buildings were demolished and the administrative building transitioned to other uses, also serving as the administrative offices for Homestar Bank from the 1990s until 2019, when it was abandoned. Constructed with steel girders, concrete, metal mesh, brick (the outside walls are three bricks thick), and beautiful marble, the building stands as one of the few remaining structures from the original campus, representing a significant piece of the area's history.

In 2023, the building was acquired by the Vintage Purse Museum, a non-profit organization, adding the restoration of the beautiful building to its causes, along with transforming the historic Art Deco structure into a museum that hires special ability and disabled adults.

About the Museum

A recent survey of United States adults found that museums were the most popular immersive activity across all age groups.

Characteristic	18-34	35-54	55+	General Population
Museums	32%	33%	47%	36%
Live music events	27%	31%	35%	31%
Escape rooms	36%	29%	12%	27%
Art Galleries	27%	25%	30%	27%
Haunted attractions	25%	24%	8%	21%
Outdoor events	14%	20%	26%	20%
Virtual reality games	24%	23%	7%	20%
Theater shows	10%	15%	22%	15%
Scavenger hunts	11%	15%	5%	11%
Street games	15%	12%	2%	11%
Pop-up restaurants	13%	11%	7%	11%
Dance performances	11%	11%	8%	10%
Geocoaching	8%	9%		7%

Published by J. Clement Statista release date 1/2022 by online survey.

Many purse museums, like those in Amsterdam and Seoul, focus on the global history of handbags, and only purses and handbags, limiting the attraction to a select clientele. The Vintage Purse Museum, NFP, will stand out inside a historic 24,000 square foot Art-Deco building as a more diverse family-oriented attraction with exhibits including comic books, Barbie, wedding, antique toys, Service Story exhibits and an Art Gallery. The Vintage Purse Museum building is grand, with historical significance, and plenty of room to display one of the largest collections of vintage purses in the world. The Vintage Purse Museum is a non-profit focusing on expanding opportunities for special ability and disabled adults.

About the Mission

In Illinois, the unemployment rates for individuals with autism and mental disabilities remain significantly higher than for the general population. For people with cognitive disabilities (including autism), about 51.7% did not participate in the workforce in 2022. This aligns with national trends, where adults with disabilities generally have a much lower labor force participation rate compared to those without disabilities. Nationally, in 2023, about 40.8% of individuals with disabilities aged 16-64 participated in the workforce, compared to 77.9% of non-disabled individuals. (Source: sourceamerica.com)

When it comes to autism specifically, unemployment challenges are even more pronounced. Estimates suggest that around 85% of autistic adults with a college education are unemployed. Many autistic adults face barriers such as lack of adequate workplace accommodation and support. Among employed autistic individuals, most are in part-time roles, with only 21% working full-time. Additionally, wages for part-time workers tend to be low, averaging around $9.11 per hour (Source: AUTISM SPEAKS - MYDISABILITYJOBS.COM)

These statistics highlight the ongoing challenges in integrating individuals with autism and mental disabilities into the workforce, particularly in terms of consistent employment and earning opportunities. Programs and initiatives like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and specific corporate initiatives (e.g., "Autism at Work" by SAP) are helping, but there is still significant progress to be made in Illinois and beyond.

The Vintage Purse Museum will be a steppingstone to acquire skills and confidence to achieve a more joyful life by breaking down the barriers that imprison special needs adults in poverty. A sanctuary and flexible employment environment (we can create a job that matches their skill set), with mentoring and training that provides a haven to reach out, interact with people, feel satisfaction and confidence from a job done well to expand horizons and life goals. The Vintage Purse Museum will encourage growth and independence, no matter what challenges a person faces so they may thrive.

Products and Services:

Products

The Vintage Purse Museum is a 501c3 nonprofit charity. All proceeds support our mission. Our Bean-to-Cup Coffee Bar and Gift Shop includes beverages, sweets and a variety of Vintage Purse Museum merchandise for purchase. Also, in cooperation with Buns Soapbox of Valparaiso, Indiana, the Vintage Purse Museum has a line of organic beauty products called ***VPM Pure Vintage*** and locally grown honey from Lee's Bees.

Museum Admission

All proceeds from the sale of admission tickets and memberships support our mission. The museum is open for scheduled tours from Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00AM to 5:00PM.

The minimum suggested donation for admission is as follows:

- **Individual Admission Ticket: $15**
- **Family of Four Admission Ticket: $50**
- **Individual Annual Membership: $50**
- **Family Annual Membership: $150**
- **Free Admission Day: Last Tuesday of the month.**

Contact Information:

Vintage Purse Museum
3 Diversatech Drive, Manteno, IL 60950
For more information, please contact Kimberly Crothers at kimberly@vintagepursemuseum.org or call us at +1-779-529-5022.

Leadership Team:

Kimberly Crothers, President, Executive Director, Founder

Kimberly Crothers has achieved notable recognition through her leadership at the Vintage Purse Museum, NFP, in Manteno, Illinois. Her contributions, especially in the realm of promoting inclusivity and providing employment opportunities for individuals with special abilities, have been widely recognized.

One of Crothers' key accomplishments includes the successful acquisition and restoration of a historically significant building that houses the museum. This project has contributed to preserving local history while also creating a platform for community engagement. The museum itself has garnered attention for its mission to break down employment barriers and empower individuals with disabilities

Crothers' dedication to her community and her advocacy for disabled people and adults with special abilities likely played a pivotal role in her being named ***Kankakee County's Woman's Club Outstanding Woman of the Year.*** This recognition highlights her significant impact both in advancing inclusivity and preserving cultural heritage through the Vintage Purse Museum charity.

Anthony Caputo, Vice President, Co-Treasurer

Anthony C Caputo has demonstrated expertise in business and system analysis, documentation and presentation, project management, information and communications technologies. Considered a subject matter expert with detailed knowledge of end-to-end technology architecture. An extensive entrepreneurial history, with high-level relationship management developing an executive suite of skills for effective business analysis, strategies, documentation, and communications to all levels of management, he has vast experience and competency in troubleshooting and problem solving.

Caputo also designed and built all the custom display cases for the first floor, creating a unique museum experience, and, with his experience in homeland security technologies with many municipalities, including the

City of Chicago and New York City, installed the CCTV security system that can identify and filter bad actors, to secure the museum and protect its employees.

Media Library:

Print and Web resolution images, as well as branding elements, videos and an initial Press Release are available for download at:

https://www.vintagepursemuseum.org/presskit

Case Studies and Testimonials:

We have helped a partner charity secure a work development grant and have taken all the museum's share of the funding to pay a spectrum artist to do a mural. She went on to attend the Leads conference and work on a mural out of state. Since returning to our county, we helped her secure a job that works well with her other artistic endeavors.

Our summer intern was on the spectrum as well and we got a donation from the Manteno American Legion 144 for her accommodation fees for her junior year at Aurora University. She wants to be a curator after graduation. She is a straight A student, and we were lucky to get her amazing research for the exhibits. The two became friends as well, which is the museum working at its best.

The housekeeper we are lucky enough to have weekly trained a woman from Thresholds who had never had a job. We gave her an application to a local business, and she is now employed with them successfully.

Lastly, we now have a Friday employee that we met when his father saved 100,000 bees from our elevator shaft. We asked how we could thank them. They asked us to carry their honey in our gift shop. Their son that attends River Valley Special Recreation Association now works in the gift shop weekly. He also has come up with a project for us to do every weekend to improve the museum. To summarize, we are not open to the public, but we are already serving the most precious part of our community.

Thank you so much for your patience and support.

https://www.vintagepursemuseum.org/testimonials/