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BMI Creates Free Activity Kits for City School Children;
Will Be Distributed June 3 at Food Distribution Sites

BALTIMORE, MD--The Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI) announced today the development of City Kits, boxed activity kits for school children based on the learning they would typically experience while on field trips to the museum. The kits are inspired by the BMI's award-winning Kids' Cannery program, an immersive experience for grades 3-8.

In the Cannery exhibit, students assume the roles of managers, foremen, can-makers, printers, labelers, steamers, shuckers, and can-fillers in an 1883 oyster cannery, they learn about the training and wages of skilled and unskilled workers, and the types of work different groups had access to. Students are "paid" for their work in tokens that they redeem in the company store, where they quickly grasp the value of a day's work. All students take home a can of "oysters" that they helped to create.

The City Kit incorporates much of this learning into a new kit. Aligned with the state social studies curriculum, the activities inspire students to think about the work involved in the process of preparing, preserving, and providing food to communities. The City Kit enables students to delve into topics that they are learning in their classes in new ways. Each kit contains four lessons. The first two encourage students to closely investigate and interpret historic maps and photographs that are provided in the kit, as they answer questions on the historic canning industry and its workers. The third lesson involves hands-on learning as students are guided through the steps involved in making their own cardboard can for vegetables. The fourth lesson allows students to flex their math muscles through a dice game that helps them learn the steps involved in building a successful canning business. The kit is complete with the lesson packets, components to make a cardboard can, crayons, and dice. Instructions have been translated into Spanish for schools that serve Spanish-language communities.

The BMI Education staff partnered with Baltimore City Public Schools and Great Kids Farm to advise on the creation and distribution of the kits at the City food distribution sites. The guidance of these partners was key in making sure that the kit was aligned, accessible, and available to as many students as possible. The initial 2,000 kits will be assembled by the museum's education staff the week of May 25 and distributed free of charge to students in Baltimore City at meal distribution sites on Wednesday, June 3. Jeff Cooper, CEO of Len The Plumber and a BMI trustee, has pledged the use of company trucks to help in the distribution effort.

"We know that students love the hands-on learning that takes place in our Kids Cannery experience at the museum, and we wanted to replicate that for children who are not able to visit during this pandemic," says Beth Maloney, Director of Interpretation at the BMI, who headed up the team of museum educators who designed the kits. "This will provide an analog experience to help fill in learning during the digital divide."

More than 30,000 school children visit the BMI each year on field trips to take tours and engage in hands-on learning about Baltimore's industrial legacy. The City Kit is the first time the cannery program will be available for at-home learning.

The pilot phase of this project is made possible with generous funding provided by the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. The museum is seeking additional funders so that they can distribute the kits more widely. Visit www.thebmi.org for more information.

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ABOUT THE BMI: The Baltimore Museum of Industry celebrates Maryland's industrial legacy and shows how innovation fuels ongoing progress. Our exhibitions, educational programs, and collections engage visitors in the stories of the people <http://www.thebmi.org> who built Baltimore and those who shape the region's future.

VISITOR INFORMATION: The Baltimore Museum of Industry is located at 1415 Key Highway, Baltimore, MD 21230. The BMI is closed temporarily in compliance with state directives during COVID-19, but is normally open Tuesday – Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., and closed Mondays and some holidays. Free on-site parking is available. Admission prices, general museum information and directions can be found at www.thebmi.org. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @BMIatWork.