LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The Museum of Us recognizes that it sits on the ancestral homeland of the Kumeyaay Nation. The Museum extends its respect and gratitude to the Kumeyaay peoples who have lived here since time immemorial.

IMAGE GUIDE: In order of appearance.

1. Cover Photo: The California Tower lit up blue as a thank you to health care workers globally for their efforts in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020).
2. CEO Micah Parzen stands before exterior banners that announce the Museum's new name. Image by Eduardo Contreras, The San Diego Union-Tribune (August 2020).
3. Exterior banners are hung on the Museum of Us. (August 2020)
TO OUR COMMUNITY,

Just three weeks after COVID forced us (and so many museums around the globe) to close our doors last year, an article by Arundhati Roy in "The Financial Times" titled The Pandemic is a Portal stopped me in my tracks. In the midst of an exponentially mounting crisis, Roy courageously sounded the call to resist the urge to seek a return to normality. She offered up an alternative, and posed a challenge to us all:

"[The pandemic] is a portal," she wrote, "a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, . . . and dead ideas. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."

Well, at the Museum of Us, we took Roy's challenge to heart. Over the past sixteen months, our driving question has been: How can we emerge from the pandemic’s portal to become a better version of ourselves? Our answer has taken a wide variety of forms. This included a long overdue name change, leading to a groundswell of love and support. It also set the stage for us to become a more equitable, decolonial, and—go figure—even a more sustainable organization.

It is within that spirit that I am proud to share this Accountability Report with you. It includes not only the strides we’ve made, but also our future aspirations for how we can do better. That’s our commitment to you.

Thank you for taking this journey with US!

MICAH PARZEN, PH.D., J.D
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
For many of us, looking back at the last year feels surreal. One word or phrase simply cannot sum-up our shared experiences, the sense of isolation felt by so many, or the overwhelming challenges faced.

A year ago our team was asking, "What lies ahead?"

**The answer: a new identity.**

On August 2, 2020 we announced our new name, Museum of Us. The change represents a public commitment to our equity, decolonizing, and anti-racism work – the core of who we are and what we stand for.

**One year later, how are we doing?**
BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

The financial impact of the pandemic meant we had to reduce our staff significantly. Parting with valued team members was heartbreaking, and we wanted to honor them by addressing historic inequities in compensation practices:

- We shifted from a part-time to a full-time model for all of our forward-facing staff.
- We implemented an industry-leading entry-level wage of $20/hour, exceeding the current California minimum wage by $6/hour. From an annual perspective, that means over $12,000 above minimum wage.
- All team members receive our full menu of generous benefits, including health care and a retirement match of up to 6%.

Other operational/budgetary actions were made as well:

- We adopted operating hours that better facilitated a team of full-time Visitor Experience Associates.
- We’re factoring-in annual cost of living pay increases, and increased transparency regarding COVID related decision making.
Building a Team That Reflects Community

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) have historically been underrepresented on museum teams, especially in leadership positions. The Museum of Us is working to change that practice.

47% of staff are BIPOC, and 50% of supervisors are BIPOC.

64% of new staff hired this year are BIPOC.

45% of trustees are BIPOC, and 50% of the Executive Committee is BIPOC.

Click here to learn more.
Our first priority was to continue our community driven projects, as much as possible, during the pandemic:

- We established virtual community consultation protocols so that work moved forward on critical Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act efforts – consultations to facilitate the repatriation of Ancestors and cultural materials to the Kumeyaay Nation and other Indigenous communities.

- We also completed consultations with Kumeyaay partners to produce a community prepared catalog of their cultural resources presently housed at the Museum, a culmination of three-plus years of work on a broader decolonizing project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

- Finally, we began consultations with members of the Maya diaspora community to reframe our long-standing, and deeply colonial, Maya exhibit.

Click here to learn more.
We embraced the digital world by launching a series of virtual exhibits on the freely accessible, world-wide Google Arts and Culture platform. These include:

- **Colonial Legacy: The Museum’s Façade**, which examines the façade of our iconic California Building, including the busts and statues of nine Colonizers who were key to establishing European dominance of California and the Pacific Northwest. The legacies of those individuals are examined from the perspectives of Native Americans who have lived on these lands for countless generations.

- **Becoming Us**, delves into the evolution of the Museum’s name – from its beginning over 100 years ago as “The San Diego Museum,” to its several decades as “San Diego Museum of Man,” and finally to the public push (beginning in 1991) to change yet again.

- We are now working on a third, this one complementing our *Race: Are We So Different?* exhibit and it will help make our important anti-racism content digitally available to a world-wide audience.

*Click here to learn more.*
We also launched a webinar series called CONVERSATIONS. The 2020/2021 series was subtitled *Reclaiming Wellness: Our Connection to Land, Tradition, and Art*. Sessions included:

- *Decolonizing Aerosol Art*, an effort to raise awareness about the true cultural roots of aerosol art or “Style Writing” in America.
- *Reclaiming Birthwork*, a look at community-centered approaches to childbirth.
- *Reclaiming Outdoors*, showcased a conversation on the joys and struggles that QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities face in the outdoors.

*Click here to learn more.*

The Museum hosted a digital screening and panel discussion of the film *Gather*, an intimate portrait of the growing movement amongst Native Americans to reclaim their spiritual, political and cultural identities through food sovereignty, while battling the trauma of centuries of genocide.

Recently, we welcomed three students from the Smithsonian Affiliate Digital Learning and Engagement Internship program. These virtual summer internships helped college students better understand the role museums can play in improving the world around them. Each of them created a learning lab which can be found at: [Museum of Us - Smithsonian Affiliations](si.edu).
SUSTAINABILITY

The tough financial realities of the pandemic drove home the lesson that the Museum must work towards building a strong, equitable, and sustainable business model. We took a giant step in that direction this year.

We launched “Membership On Us,” a radical new approach to membership where we provide unlimited general admission for one year to anyone who purchases a daily admission ticket.

Not only does this program redefine public access, it will help build a community of support.

We’ve already seen a huge upsurge of over 14,000 new members and counting!
LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS

Fiscal Year 2021: July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Expenses: $2,158,059

Revenue:
- Earned Revenue: $506,655
- Contributed Revenue: $1,928,207

Figures presented are preliminary and unaudited.
THE ROAD AHEAD

Embracing a new identity continues to be both a challenging and rewarding experience. While we’ve come far, we still have a long way to go. For this current year our top-most priorities will be:

- **COMMUNITY DRIVEN WORK** – Move forward with the Kumeyaay Nation to begin planning a new exhibit prioritizing their voice and needs.

- **REPATRIATION** – A core part of our work for years to come, our team will continue to partner with Native American and Indigenous communities to ensure that cultural materials and Ancestors return home.

- **ANTI-RACISM** – Launch virtual programming to complement our “Race: Are We So Different?” exhibit. Embark on a two year project to reimagine the Race exhibit, making it more reflective of community needs.

- **ACCESS** - As part of “Membership On Us” we will pilot an effort to enroll inadequately serviced San Diego County students in free year-long museum admission. Adopt protocols for providing access to individuals experiencing financial hardship.

- **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION (DEAI)** – Compile an internal DEAI report and produce a DEAI orientation packet for use when onboarding volunteers, staff, and trustees.
THANK YOU

To the countless supporters who have contributed to the movement of this work, and to our community for continuing to hold us accountable to our commitments. To learn more about our supporters, please visit:

museumofus.org/accountability-2020-2021