

# SPS Students Turn Class Project Into Museum Program



The [National WWII Museum](https://www.nationalww2museum.org/) (<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/>) in New Orleans is one of Louisiana's top tourist attractions. Its multimedia experiences and vast collection of artifacts draw rave reviews from travel sites. But for Adam Foreman, the museum's Student Programs Specialist, it could have been doing more to engage adolescent visitors.

Thanks to his Northwestern University School of Professional Studies online [Museum Studies Certificate Program](https://sps.northwestern.edu/professional-development/museum-studies/) (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/professional-development/museum-studies/>), that challenge became EdConnect—a new type of tour at the museum.

“Many kids have a distant relative who was in the war,” he says. “But it’s still hard to communicate the scale of the sacrifice, the impact of racial propaganda, or the way people at home were affected. I wanted us to make more real connections with students without straining our current resources.”

So when one of his SPS instructors, [Debra Kerr](https://sps.northwestern.edu/professional-development/museum-studies/faculty.php), (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/professional-development/museum-studies/faculty.php>)

asked Foreman's class to "to find a museum problem and solve it," he knew he had his challenge.

Foreman worked on the project with five other students, all in different parts of the country and collaborating remotely. They developed the EdConnect concept as a series of short, educator-led sessions preceding a high school's physical tour of a museum. The sessions would employ group discussion, photo analysis and other primary sources—based on their teacher's chosen topic—to guide and inform the tour experience. Foreman's group also created a budget, proposal, and implementation plan, and then tested the idea with real students.

But how did a class project make it into The National WWII Museum?

"I was so impressed with the quality of our work that I brought it up to my directors and they loved it and got the funding started," says Foreman. "Instructor Karr's field experience was critical in preparing for a real implementation and managing questions from museum leaders. Typically only 5,000 of the 40,000 teenagers who pass through our museum every year are actively engaged. EdConnect is changing that."

Foreman's love of museums began when he experienced a civil war reenactment at the site of the former Union headquarters. At 16, he started working as a tour guide at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and later earned his bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Public History from the University of Louisiana. He had stints at several museums before taking on his current role at The National WWII Museum.

“Even with my educational background and professional experience, I needed to know more about the educational side of museums,” he says. “SPS gave me that perspective and hands-on experience.”

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