

DISCOVERY MUSEUM



Report of Generosity 2023



Dear Friends of the Museum,

A thriving organization doesn't just happen—it's made possible by an ever-strengthening network of people committed to the shared vision of doing what is best for children and their families. We are grateful to you—our members, leaders, partners, advocates, and supporters—for believing in the work of Discovery Museum and its impact on the community.

Every day at the Museum, in ways large and small, we are helping to enrich the lives of children and families. Whether it's providing a place for playful learning that strengthens bonds with a caregiver, sparking confidence through our Traveling Science Workshops, fostering a sense of comfort and community at an Especially For Me event that accommodates challenges, tackling difficult subjects head-on with the Discovery Museum Speaker Series, or offering our solar-generated power to those in need at a discount—Discovery Museum is there as a valued community resource.

We couldn't look back on 2023 without acknowledging the work of Neil Gordon, who retired in December after 14 years as CEO. To say that Neil went out with a bang would be an understatement, as 2023 brought our total served to a record high of 252,945 people. It also brought the second year in a row of record donor support with over 1,200 donors giving more than \$1,000,000. On the following pages, you will read about the many people who helped us achieve this success. Support comes in many forms—it is an investment of resources, time, expertise, and strategic thoughtfulness to fulfill a mission that we all believe in. We hope you will enjoy reading about and celebrating what we were able to do in 2023 with your help.

The role you have played in helping the Museum reach this point cannot be overstated. Our collective vision to make the world a better place for children and their families will continue to galvanize our community. Your enduring support makes a real difference both on and off our Museum campus. Thank you for your partnership on this wonderful journey.

Sincerely,



Marie R. B. Beam
CEO



Xuan Kong, Ph. D.
President, Board of Directors

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Xuan Kong, Ph.D., *Treasurer*
Vibha Oza, *Clerk*

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Thank you, Harry! Welcome, Xuan!

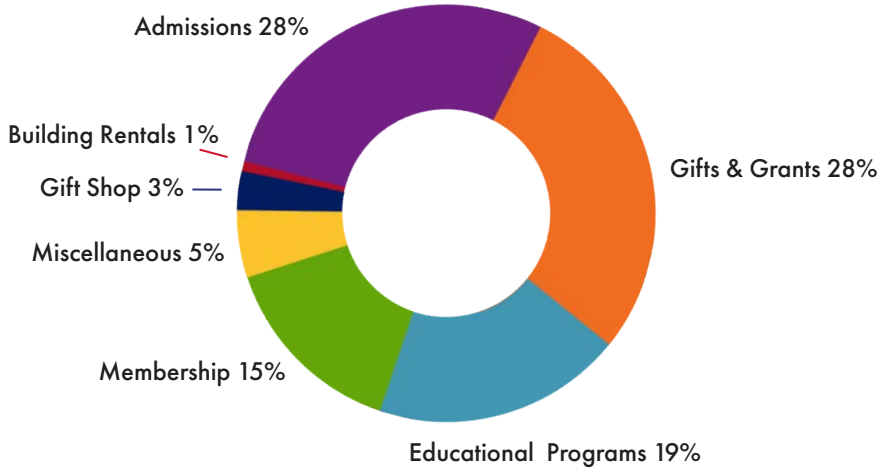


We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Harry Hollenberg, who served as President of the Board from 2020-2023. Taking that role weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic, Harry led the Board through the Museum's initial response, the ensuing four-and-a-half month closure, and the learn-as-you-go of reopening and rebuilding. Harry was at the helm for the Museum's 40th anniversary in 2022, sat on the Nominating & Governance and Development Committees, and ably guided the critically important search for a new CEO in 2023 and the Board's preparation for that transition. A Board member since 2016, Harry remains on the Finance Committee, leads the Museum's Scholarship Task Force, and sits on the Governance Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Task Force, and the People Task Force.

Beginning in 2024, Harry turned his presidency over to Xuan Kong, former Board Treasurer and a longtime leader, both on the Discovery Museum Board and in our community. A Board member since 2018, he has served on the Museum's Solar Task Force, 20th Anniversary Committee, and Scholarship Task Force. Xuan sits on the Finance Committee, Nominating & Governance Committee, and Governance Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Task Force. He has been a member of the Museum's Science and Technology Advisory Council since 2018. We are grateful for Xuan's extraordinary commitment to the Museum and to the children and families we serve.



Operating Support & Revenue

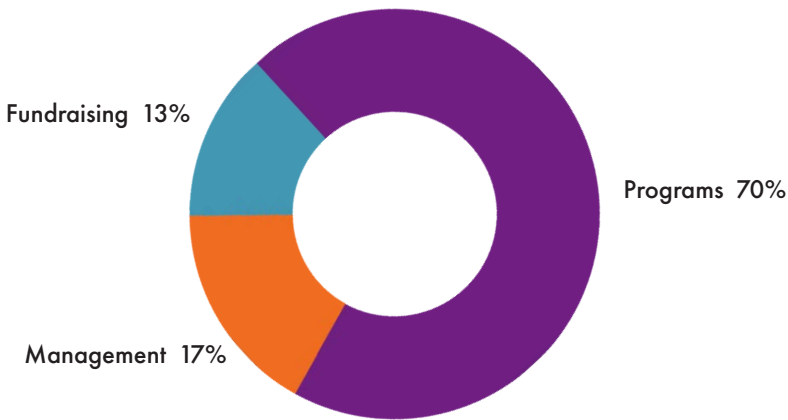


Admissions	\$1,081,429
Gifts and Grants	\$1,078,599
Educational Programs	\$736,183
Memberships	\$563,138
Miscellaneous	\$198,438
Gift Shop	\$114,502
Building Rentals	\$29,535
Total	\$3,801,824

Other Revenue

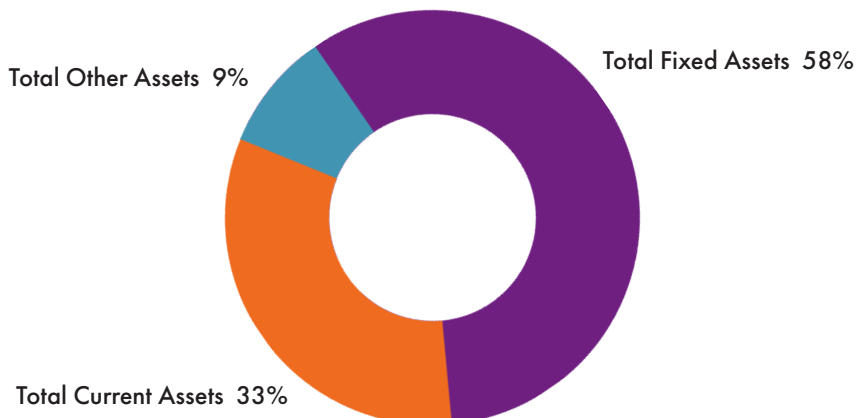
Multi-year Pledge	\$200,000
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Operating Expenses



Programs	\$2,241,289
Fundraising	\$539,764
Management	\$427,328
Total	\$3,208,381

Total Liabilities & Assets



Total Current Assets	\$4,122,967
Total Fixed Assets	\$7,328,704
Total Other Assets	\$1,164,682
Total Assets	\$12,616,353
Total Liabilities	\$2,068,240
Total Net Assets	\$10,548,113

2nd year in a row of record donor support, with more than \$1M in gifts from more than 1,200 donors.

During its first full year online, our solar canopy generated 344,850 kWh of energy, saving 26,757 gallons of gasoline. We sold 50% of the clean energy produced at a discount to four other nonprofits and 10 low-income families.

Collected more than 2,800 pounds of gently used clothing and gave it away during our free "Bessie's Closet" pop-up shop.

Continued our support of incarcerated young fathers at MCI-Concord, delivering new family play kits, books, and holiday gifts.

Served 252,945 people in 2023, a 24% increase from 2022 making it our largest year ever!

Increased membership by 30% to 5,622 member families, an all-time high for the Museum. Nearly 2,000 of those memberships were provided for free to first-time parents or families in need.

Hosted collection drives for food and personal hygiene items for Open Table and Acton Food Pantry, the Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center, Cradles to Crayons, and Hope & Comfort.

Implemented a staff and visitor waste composting program.

25% visited for free or nearly free through our access programs

376 volunteers donated more than 3,230 hours of time and talent to the Museum.

Donated \$19,510 worth of free admission passes and memberships to 311 nonprofit organizations for their fundraisers.

Began a relationship with Wonderfund to welcome foster families to the Museum with free admission; nearly 500 had visited by year-end.

Developed, evaluated, and neared completion of the IMLS-funded "Cause & Effect: What Happens If..." exhibit, the most significant new exhibit developed since the new building opened in 2018.

Delivered a record-breaking 2,737 Traveling Science Workshops to 53,593 students in 116 towns—nearly every town or city in Eastern Massachusetts!

Total revenue grew to \$3.8M, a 22% increase from 2022.

Welcomed 11,096 students, teachers, and chaperones on Field Trips to the Museum, 27% for free or nearly free.

Selected as one of 15 finalists for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the highest honor in the museum field.

Partnered with three state housing shelters to provide free memberships.

The 11th year of the free Discovery Museum Speaker series tackled tough topics such as slavery, gun violence, and incarceration and their impact on families. More than 2,100 people registered or watched the event recordings.

Awarded four \$1,500 scholarships to high school juniors and seniors from 143 applications across 73 cities and towns.

Executed three multi-year Institute of Library Services federal grants.

2,027 kids and their families attended 26 free Especially for Me events for families with members who have disabilities.

The Discovery Store continued its move toward lower-impact products and packaging, and topped \$100K in sales for the first time.

Launched our visitor carbon offset program: an opt-out fee of \$0.50 per "car," used to purchase carbon offsets to support a certified clean energy project in Uganda.

23,389 visitors participated in 307 staff-led public programs

Our first Discovery Gala since 2019 raised more than \$200,000, a 25% increase. 210 guests attended to connect with our mission and impact and support our work.

Have you ever thought, “I wish I could do more for Discovery Museum?”

If so, then we invite you to consider a legacy gift. Legacy gift is a phrase used to describe gifts that are arranged while you are living, but that most often take effect after your death. They are sometimes referred to as planned gifts, and include donations made through your will, living trust, a retirement plan, or life insurance policy.

While there are pragmatic advantages to leaving a legacy gift to the Museum (such as lowering taxes without altering current income), the greater advantage is that you can ensure that Discovery Museum will continue to be a cornerstone of our community, honoring its commitment to children and families.

Planned gifts come in a range of options, and we'd be happy to discuss how to tailor them to meet your unique circumstances and philanthropic goals.

For more information, or to alert us about your plans, please contact Tobey Fossey, Director of Development, at (978) 264-4200 ext. 124 or tfossey@discoveryacton.org.



“Discovery Museum was a great place for our kids to go, to learn, and to grow when they were young. Now our grandkids look forward to visiting the Museum, and especially Discovery Woods, when they are with us. The goal with our planned gift to the Museum is to ensure that these experiences are available to other kids and families for many generations to come.”

- Jeff and Janet Glidden

Advantages of Giving

Many people know they can deduct donations to charity from their income taxes, but increasing your knowledge of tax planning strategies can maximize your giving impact. Here are some ways that contributing to Discovery Museum makes fiscal sense:

- 1. Long-Term Appreciated Assets** – If you donate long-term appreciated assets like bonds, stocks, or real estate, you generally don't have to pay capital gains, and you can take an income tax deduction for the full fair-market value.
- 2. Estate Planning** – By naming Discovery Museum in your will or as a beneficiary of a qualified insurance policy, retirement plan, or trust, you reduce or even eliminate the burden of estate tax for your heirs. (It is important to consult your tax and estate planning advisors regarding modifications to your estate plans.)
- 3. Donor-Advised Fund** – A donor-advised fund is a dedicated account for charitable giving. When you contribute to a donor-advised fund, you are eligible for an immediate tax deduction. You can then recommend grants over time and invest the funds for tax-free growth. Donor-advised funds provide many benefits for organizing and planning giving, but they also offer advantages in terms of income, capital gains, and estate taxes.
- 4. IRA Charitable Rollover** – This allows individuals who are at least 70 ½ years old to donate up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations directly from their IRA, without that donation being counted as taxable income when it is withdrawn. To qualify, contributions must come from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA, and they must be made directly to a qualified charitable organization (like Discovery Museum!).

If you have questions or want to discuss a donation to Discovery Museum, please contact Tobey Fossey, Director of Development, at tfossey@discoveryacton.org.

Discovery Museum does not provide tax, legal or accounting advice. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for, tax, legal, or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal, and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.

We acknowledge the many individuals and organizations who supported Discovery Museum in 2023, whether they contributed financially, donated their time and expertise, or provided material donations. All of these gestures of support, in combination, have made our work possible and our museum strong. Just as we seek to be of service to all, we strive to be inclusive and equitable in our gratitude.

Anonymous	Liz Angell	Paul and Kristen Bastide
Margaret Aalto	Anita's Shoe Boutique	Battleship Cove
Carolyn Abbott	Susan Anness	Bayside Resort
Nancy Ables	Applebee's Grill & Bar	Madison Bazzano
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Thomas and Jill Adams	Laura and Francisco Arvidson-Guzman	Judy and Glenn Bell
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Mary Zoll
The Zoo in Forest Park & Education Center
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Thank you to these corporate partners for their investment and engagement, which helped advance our work in 2023.



Recordings of the 2023 Discovery Museum Speaker Series are available on YouTube.* Visit <http://bit.ly/DMSpeakerSeries> to find the link to available recordings and to learn more about our Speaker Series.



Teaching Today's Kids To Spot Tomorrow's Fake News

Susan Engel

Ph.D, Department of Psychology, Williams College



Who's Raising the Kids?: Big Tech, Big Business, and the Lives of Children

Dr. Susan Linn

Author and psychologist



A Family Revealed: From Slavery to Hope

**not recorded*

Wallis Wickham Raemer, educator

Reggie Harris, folk singer and social activist



How To Talk to Kids About Gun Violence

Kara Baskin, moderator, with **Dr. Neena McConnico**, **Dr. Patricia Crain de Galarce**, and **Dr. Anthony Rao**



Incarceration and Families: What is the Toll on Children?

Dr. Nneka Jones Tapia

Managing Director of Justice Initiatives at Chicago Beyond

30 Years of Sparking Discovery in the Classroom

For 30 years, Discovery Museum has changed student attitudes toward STEM learning—and their sense of their own abilities to “do” science—by bringing engaging, materials-rich, hands-on STEM explorations into school classrooms throughout New England. Traveling Science Workshops (TSW) have helped more than half a million PreK to 8th grade students experience the joy of being a scientist—by asking questions, making predictions, and sharing observations—while exploring one of 23 topics ranging from Bubbles to Magnets to Green Energy to Physical Changes of Matter. The real-world “phenomena” that are all around us every day become demystified and exciting to explore using accessible, everyday materials. In 2023, a record-breaking 2,737 workshops were delivered in 116 towns to 53,593 students—a 17% increase from 2022.

Traveling Science Workshops play a key role in the Museum’s efforts to remove barriers to STEM access. By delivering programs to students right in their classrooms, the Museum can reach children of all backgrounds, abilities, or prior experience with informal science learning. And because TSW harnesses the curiosity that children naturally possess, the workshops themselves are accessible to all children. In fact, classroom teachers have praised TSW for its inclusivity, noting that even students who speak no English or who struggle academically can participate actively and enthusiastically. The Museum also subsidizes workshops for thousands of children each year in underfunded districts and continually works to expand this aspect of its reach.



At the heart of the success and tremendous impact of Traveling Science Workshops is our staff of talented and caring instructors. A beautiful party in the Discovery Treehouse was a fitting way to celebrate their 30 years of impact.

Discovery Gala 2023: Make the Connection

Thanks to you, our donors, *Discovery Gala 2023* was our most successful event to date. Over 200 guests joined us for a fun and inspiring evening, and a total of \$204,154 was raised to support the many programs and partnerships that extend beyond our walls and serve kids and families right in their own communities.

While the word “gala” was in the title, this event broke that mold. One guest commented, “It was one of the most creative, interesting, and informative galas I have been to. And I’ve been to a lot of fundraising events.” Creativity, connection, and comfort was the name of the game for that night. Guests were highly encouraged to come in jeans and be ready for fun. To urge guests to learn more about the Museum and its outreach work, ten different “Inspiration Stations” were set up where guests could discover more about the programs the Museum runs. Many guests were indeed inspired to support the Museum!

In keeping with the Museum’s institutional commitment to operating sustainably, we are proud to report that *Discovery Gala* had a uniquely low environmental impact: It was a 100% solar-powered event; materials were printed digitally on 100% recycled stock by a carbon-neutral printer; the event caterer partnered with local growers to present a menu of sustainably grown foods; waste was composted or recycled; and the Museum purchased carbon credits to offset the vehicle emissions of all Gala guests and vendors.



We hope you will save the date of
September 28, 2024, for our next
Discovery Gala!

This list includes all staff employed at Discovery Museum any time January 1 through December 31, 2023.

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Admissions Representative

Marie Beam
Chief Development Officer

Gaynor Bigelbach
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Assistant Manager of Visitor Services

Martha Hull
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Kathy Talbot
Traveling Science Workshops Instructor

Sadhana Thambirajah
Explorer

Amy Toporoff
*Traveling Science Workshops Materials
Prep Coordinator*

Carly Troccolo
Scheduling Manager

Kathie Watt
*Assistant Director of School & Group
Programs*

Alexandra Weil
Assistant Manager of Visitor Services

Alexandra Wood
Manager of Visitor Services

James Yarin
Admissions Representative

Jennie Yoo
Field Trip Manager

William Zawada
Explorer

Simona Zilberberg
Explorer



Thank you, Neil!

After 14 years at the helm of Discovery Museum and nearly 30 years in the children's museum field, Neil H. Gordon retired on December 31, 2023.

It has been hard to say goodbye. It is also hard to overstate Neil's impact, truly. Just some of Neil's forward-thinking accomplishments include:

- Restoring the Museum to financial and operational health, tripling operating income and growing total assets from \$1.7M to \$12.6M
- Creating a fully-accessible campus, building, and exhibits
- Developing a giant, accessible treehouse and nature playscape, to help kids explore and appreciate the natural world
- Launching a robust program for serving, always for free, families with children who have disabilities
- Providing hands-on STEM to nearly 54,000 students in their classrooms last year alone
- Serving 25% of our audience for free or nearly free annually
- Earning a spot among the small number of finalists for the highest honor in the museum industry, an IMLS National Medal
- Launching a scholarship program for high schoolers who embody the Museum's spirit and mission
- Creating a nationally-known speaker series, offered for free since 2012
- Thriving, rather than just surviving, after the pandemic
- Developing on-site solar that powers our campus, four other nonprofits, and 10 homes of low-income families
- Providing 2.5 million kids and their families with fun, hands-on, open-ended learning in his 14 years as CEO, more than half the number served in our 41-year history

We are tremendously grateful for Neil's service, his inspired vision, and the mark he has left on Discovery Museum and the communities we serve. Thanks to his efforts, the Museum is in a position of strength from which to expand the depth and breadth of our support for kids and families.



In 2023, Neil was recognized for his tremendous impact on the Museum and the children and families we serve. He was honored with: the Middlesex Savings Bank John R. Heerwagen Award, a Fred Rogers Institute Helper Award, a Mass Nonprofit Network Nonprofit Excellence Award, and the New England Museum Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

Welcome, Marie!

After an extended search, the Board of Directors named Marie R. B. Beam as the next CEO, effective January 1, 2024; Marie had served as Discovery Museum's Chief Development Officer since 2013. Her leadership of the Development function effected a nearly 250% increase in Annual Fund giving in less than 10 years, which increased from \$286K prior to her arrival to more than \$1M in 2022.

Marie also oversaw the \$8.8M, five-year Campaign for the Discovery Museum, the institution's first campaign in 30 years; spearheaded fundraising through the COVID-19 pandemic that flipped the Museum's traditional earned and contributed revenue shares; and conducted the \$900K Bridge to the Future Campaign to support the Museum through the pandemic and the Museum's conversion to 100% on-site solar electricity.



"This is a moment when there are a bunch of phrases people use—the torch is being passed, the baton is being passed ... I don't think of it as passing something because it implies I was holding it and you were waiting to hold it. I think your hands were on it the whole time, so I'm just taking my hand off. Now it's yours."

- Neil's message to Marie during a celebration of his retirement