MISSION:
To create opportunities for joyful learning and discovery through hands-on experiences in the sciences and arts.

You know Discovery Center Museum as a hands-on children’s museum with over 300 exciting, interactive exhibits spread over a two-floor area. You know many of our exhibits relate to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). You also probably know that in the museum’s backyard visitors can explore our Discovery Park - a multi-level science park with a hands-on twist. You even know we are a nationally recognized children’s museum with an outdoor science park, traveling exhibits, and so much more.

But did you know Discovery Center is more than a museum?

While you know about all of the things happening inside the museum, we are excited to share some of the other ways we are creating opportunities for learning and discovery in our community.

2018 was another record setting year! More than a quarter of a million people experienced Discovery Center via exhibits, classes, camps, special events, after-school programs and outreach.
MORE THAN A MUSEUM...

Developing Youth for the Careers of Tomorrow

Many of the jobs of the future haven’t even been imagined yet. The YES (Youth Experiencing Science) Volunteer program prepares high school students for a new era by helping them learn STEM skills that will allow them to innovate and adapt to new roles and changing technologies.

YES Volunteers gain valuable experiences in STEM disciplines and science education as they learn the concepts behind the hands-on projects they facilitate. Teens work one-on-one with Discovery Center educators to hone their public speaking, leadership, and organizational skills.

Over the course of a year, over 150 youth volunteers are impacted by the YES Volunteer Program at Discovery Center.

My time as a YES volunteer at Discovery Center has truly been transformative. My volunteering has afforded me the opportunity to learn and teach at the same time, and it has reaffirmed my decision to pursue a STEM career!

2018 YES Volunteer
MORE THAN A MUSEUM...

Learning Through Play

Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them.

Discovery Center’s Early Childhood Playgroups guide parents and their children in fun activities and exploration. Discovery Center partners with local organizations to deliver playgroups to underserved children aged 0-3 and their parents. Our partners include Rockford Public School District 205, Easter Seals, Children’s Home & Aid Society, and Rockford Housing Authority at The Grove.

Participating in a supported playgroup with our skilled educator has a positive impact on children’s learning and social and emotional development. Our programs help parents understand the importance of interacting with their child and learning to engage in more quality interactions.

Children who participate in playgroups have improved learning and wellbeing outcomes. Young parents develop their parenting skills and confidence to support their child’s learning and development. The result is improved parent-child interactions at home which is the first step in school readiness.

Over the course of a year over 350 parents and children have taken steps toward school readiness in our playgroups.
MORE THAN A MUSEUM...
Making Play Accessible for All Children

In Winnebago County there are over 3,000 children with cognitive or physical disabilities. In partnership with The Blazer Foundation, Discovery Center offers Mornings of Fun—providing regular play opportunities for children with special needs and their families.

We know visiting a museum can be overwhelming. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for children and families to have the best experience possible—allowing parents to enjoy time with their child and to connect with other families. Our Mornings of Fun program occurs before the museum opens to the public. This time allows families to explore at their own pace, become familiar with the museum, and continue their visit during public hours.

The most important part of this program is that by setting aside that special hour for our children they are able to FULLY enjoy the Discovery Center without distractions, discrimination or judgement. We, the parents, can thoroughly enjoy our children as they explore Discovery Center and the world. Thank you!

Parent of child attending Mornings of Fun
MORE THAN A MUSEUM...

Teaching STEM After-School

After the school bell rings, children are learning, exploring, making, and questioning. Discovery Center delivers hands-on interactive STEM activities to at-risk students at ten schools.

Last year we worked with nearly 750 students. 83 percent of these children are living in poverty and have been identified as performing below their peers in science and math. Our goal is to engage and spark an interest in STEM and science related careers at the elementary school level. When we spark interest and develop confidence early, students are more likely to continue on to study STEM subjects throughout high school, college, and beyond.

In addition to the after school program for students, we host Family Nights at each of the schools. Parents learn what children have been doing in the after school program and explore STEM-based career options with their children. We also ensure all children in this program visit the museum on a free field trip. Children’s natural curiosity is stimulated by visiting the museum and engaging with the materials and exhibits at the museum.

Children in the Discovery Center’s after-school program end the year with improved grades and a newfound confidence in science and math.
MORE THAN A MUSEUM...

Because of You

All that we accomplish is because of you—our generous supporters.

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Illinois Space Grant Consortium
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- OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing

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- BMO Harris Bank
- Ecolab, Inc.
- Field Fastener Supply Co.

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- Regal Beloit Corporation
- Rock Valley Credit Union
- Sjostrom & Sons, Inc.
- SwedishAmerican - A Division of UW Health
- Thermo Fisher Scientific

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- Rae Biesiadecki
- In memory of
- Gerald Chamberlain
- Roger & Lyn Becknell
- In memory of
- Nancy J. Coyle
- William Coole
- In memory of
- Gianna Foti
- Tony & Vicki Foti
- In memory of
- Barbara LaSalle
- Brett Enleben
- Patrick LaSalle
- In memory of
- Allen Pang and Steven Pang
- Catherine Pang

In memory of
- Emma Stiegitz
- Thomas, Barbara, Nora, Ezra, Hannah Stiegitz
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- Janice Voss
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In memory of
- Don Zimmerman
- Betty Zimmerman

In honor of
- Colleen Anderson
- Steve & Andrea Jensen

While we strive to maintain accurate records, if your name does not appear as it should, please contact us.
READER'S DIGEST, October 2018 - mention in article “These are the 15 Best Places to Move to in the U.S.”. Rockford was named a top city and Discovery Center is credited “…it’s home to nearly a dozen museums, including the top-ranked family Discovery Center.”

FAMILY VACATION CRITIC, September 2018 - named Discovery Center one of the “15 Best Museums for Toddlers in the U.S.”

TRIP ADVISOR, 2018 - earned the “Trip Advisor Hall of Fame” distinction based on visitor reviews. 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 - awarded the “Certificate of Excellence.”


READER'S DIGEST

FAMILY VACATION CRITIC

TRIP ADVISOR

ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR
By the Numbers

**INCOME**
- Museum Admission/ Memberships ........... $840,379
- Grants and Contributions ........... $575,378
- Total In-Kind .................. $466,517
- Program and Class Fees .......... $209,907
- Retail Sales .................... $92,891
- Rental Sales ................... $121,450
- Investment and Other Income ...... ($50,453)

**TOTAL INCOME** ........... $2,256,069

**EXPENSES**
- Operations .................... $674,865
- Education/Programs ........... $475,270
- In-Kind Occupancy .......... $442,997
- Exhibits ...................... $213,865
- Building and Grounds ....... $172,001
- Marketing and Development .... $128,436
- Retail Sales .................... $58,967

**TOTAL EXPENSE** ........... $2,166,401

**PEOPLE SERVED**
- Public Hours Attendance .......... 139,620
- Outreach ........................ 41,596
- Special Events .................. 35,968
- After School Achievement Program .... 29,957
- Group Tours ................... 24,566
- Classes, Camps and Workshops ...... 5,133

**TOTAL SERVED** ........... 276,834

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**By the Numbers**

- **Outreach:** 14%
- **Public Hours Attendance:** 50%
- **Group Tours:** 10%
- **After School Achievement Program:** 12%
- **Special Events:** 13%
- **Outreach:** 14%

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**518 VOLUNTEERS** gave **4,519 HOURS** of service
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