



CELEBRATING  
**35** years



2016 Annual Report

# For 35 years

Discovery Center has been a place for learning, fun and growth, all the while maintaining a wide variety of activities, exhibits and events for visitors to enjoy.

We celebrate and appreciate our groups of volunteers who have shown continued support this past year.

## 4200 HOURS OF DEDICATION

- **Board of Directors** - 24 members contributing over 670 hours of their time and expertise
- **Auxiliary Committee** - 150 hours for *Discover the Spirits* fundraiser
- **Community partners** - 24 businesses and school groups totaling over 1400 hours
- **Individuals** - 35 adults
- **Teens** - 150 active Youth Experiencing Science (Y.E.S.)

“An incredible place to take the kids. Tons of hands on exhibits and a wide variety. Just about something for everyone.”



## 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

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Catherine Povalitis



Thermo Fisher Scientific



Y.E.S. volunteers



UTC Aerospace Systems

# We celebrate the highlights of our 35<sup>th</sup> year!

## EXHIBITS



- *Clifford the Big Red Dog* temporary traveling exhibit was immensely popular with young visitors and their families which directly related to our record attendance.
- New installment in *Tot Spot* was a wooden climbing structure that is presently a cruise ship. It will have rotating themes to keep playtime fresh and exciting.
- The handicap accessible picnic area in *Discovery Park* was completed, including easier wheelchair accessibility to the picnic area and a sturdy changing table for older children with disabilities.

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

- *Special Mornings of Fun* invited children with special needs to explore multi-sensory exhibits in the museum at a pace comfortable to them before the museum opened to the general public.
- 52 *Family Free Days* occurred in 2016 providing museum access for all.
- Discovery Center served as the lead agency for the After-School Achievement Program at Nelson, Conklin and Lathrop Elementary Schools in Rockford Public School District 205.
- Throughout 2016, the Discovery Center provided field trips for 22,234, of which were 2,600 pre-school aged children in RPS 205's early childhood program and 550 children in the Head Start program.
- Agency Pass Program offered social service agencies memberships allowing for unlimited free visits for their clients.
- New in 2016—early childhood playgroups for children ages 0-3 years and their parents. Discovery Center partnered with RPS 205 Prevention Initiative (0-3) Program, Early Head Start and Easter Seals Teen Parenting Program. Our parent-child interaction program offered developmentally appropriate activities focusing on literacy, social emotional development, and other approaches to learning geared toward school readiness.
- We offered free admission to 463 of our nation's military personnel and their families through Blue Star Museums program.



Parent and child interaction during playgroups



Head Start children on a Discovery Center field trip



Parent and child interaction during playgroups

# So Much to Celebrate!

## PEOPLE SERVED

- During 2016, Discovery Center served a total of 261,836 people, a 6% increase from 2015.

## CLASSES

- Discovery Center offered a comprehensive variety of classes for children and their families ranging from Family Classes and Tot Spot Classes, to Home School Classes and summer camps.
- Our Baby and Me class was a drop-in program for children birth to 18 months which was very popular with parents and grandparents and their little ones.

“  
*A Rockford gem for family fun. Affordable family fun at its best. Great place to make a day out of.*  
”

## FUNDRAISERS

- Discovery Center was selected as one of Rockford ProAm's recipients for 2016. The Museum supported Rockford ProAm with 100 volunteers on the day of the event.
- *Discover the Spirits*, the Museum's signature fundraiser event, raised nearly \$20,000!

## NATIONAL AND LOCAL RECOGNITION

- Over the years, Discovery Center has been voted Best Child-Friendly Place in *Rockford Register Star's* Annual "What Rocks" contest. We were honored to be awarded this recognition once again in 2016.
- Since 2014 Discovery Center has received the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence.
- Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau "2016 Year in Review" recognized Discovery Center as one of the Top 10 Attractions in the Rockford Region.
- We were listed as one of 5 Best Museums for Water Play in *Chicago Parent* magazine.

Discovery Center founded at site of 401 S. Main as joint project of Junior League of Rockford and Rockford Area Arts Council

1984 Museum incorporates, forms board of directors; hosted first traveling exhibition

1986 First Bubble Festival. Search for permanent home begins

1991 Moved to new location at Riverfront Museum Park and outdoor science park built

1996 One millionth visitor was welcomed

1981

2,110  
visitors

1984

1986

20,993  
visitors

1991

110,200  
visitors

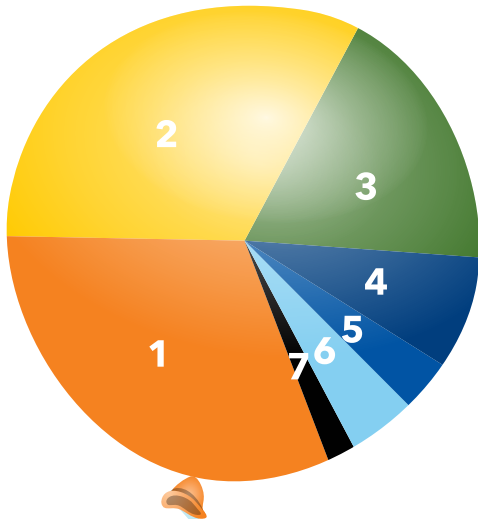
1996

134,717  
visitors

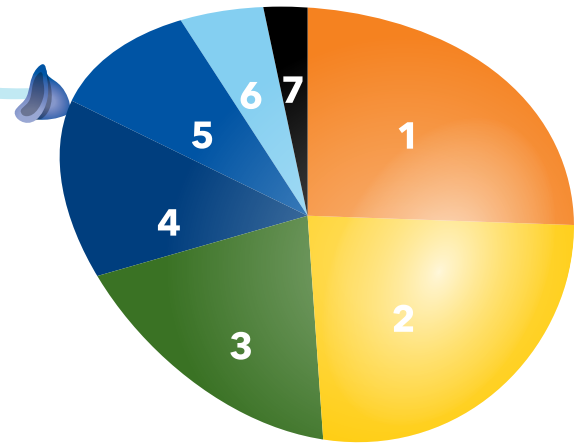
# Income

1	Museum Admission/Memberships .....	\$769,383
2	Grants and Contributions .....	\$799,622
3	Total In-Kind .....	\$451,364
4	Program and Class Fees .....	\$190,492
5	Retail Sales.....	\$85,958
6	Rental Sales .....	\$116,023
7	Investment and Other Income.....	\$46,314

**TOTAL INCOME      \$2,459,156**



31%  
32%  
18%  
8%  
4%  
5%  
2%



# Expenses

1	Operations.....	\$513,951	25%
2	Education/Programs.....	\$471,603	23%
3	In-Kind Occupancy.....	\$435,614	22%
4	Exhibits.....	\$234,008	12%
5	Building and Grounds.....	\$172,281	9%
6	Marketing and Development.....	\$116,593	6%
7	Retail Sales.....	\$66,518	3%

**TOTAL EXPENSE      \$2,010,568**

After-school partnership with Rockford Public Schools begins

Ranked 4th Best Children's Museum in the nation by *Child* magazine

Expansion campaign with Burpee begins

Outreach to Space created to reach rural and underserved audiences

Broke ground for 15,000 foot expansion

Completion of Expansion—Tot Spot, AgZibit, Classrooms & Woodward Hall Exhibit Gallery

STEM focus on exhibits & programs—*Figure It Out & Simple Machines*

New Secret Garden in the outdoor science park

Recognized as Best Child-friendly Place in Rockford Region in "What Rocks" contest

2000

2001

2002

**203,088**  
visitors

2006

**213,833**  
visitors

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2016

**254,477**  
visitors

**261,836**  
visitors

# We celebrate our generous donors!

We thank our many corporate and individual supporters for the opportunities your gifts provided in 2016.

## Corporate Donors

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Lowe's Distribution Center  
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In Memory of Sarah Armato  
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Kathryn Beekman  
B. Ann More

In Memory of  
James Biesiadecki  
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In Memory of Lisa Coole  
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In Memory of  
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Donna Benson

In Memory of  
Barbara LaSalle  
Max & Claudia Anderson  
Ryan & Melissa LaSalle  
Theodore & Maureen Unton

In Honor of Lisa Normoyle  
Joe Love & Arles Hendershot

“

*It's a superior place for children of all ages. Many types of exhibits - very kid friendly. A safe learning environment for family. Easy to get to and adequate parking. Beautiful setting located on the Rock River in Rockford, IL.*

”



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Kenneth & Crystal Worley



“

*Best place ever for kids...worst is getting them out of there.*

”

*While we strive to maintain accurate records, if a name does not appear on the list as it should, please contact our Development Department at 815-972-2834.*



## By the numbers

Total people served

**261,836**

Museum public attendance

**124,153**

After-school program attendance

**34,723**

Education programs and  
class attendance

**31,811**

**CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF CREATING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR JOYFUL LEARNING AND DISCOVERY THROUGH  
HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES IN THE SCIENCES AND ARTS**



711 N Main St, Rockford, IL 61103

| [discoverycentermuseum.org](http://discoverycentermuseum.org)

| 815-963-6769