

DISCOVERY MUSEUM



Report of Generosity 2025



Dear Friends of Discovery Museum,

In the midst of many changes to our operating environment in 2025, Discovery Museum remained anchored to its founding mission and the year one goals of its Strategic Plan.

Our plan laid out a pathway to deepen our work and strengthen our organization—reaching more children and families, addressing some areas of deferred maintenance on our campus, and investing in fair compensation and benefits for our excellent staff. Last year, we invested in a 7.6% increase in total compensation for our team—the people whose care for our work and those we serve makes everything we do better.



We also made a big promise to our community: To double the scale of Traveling Science Workshops, our curriculum-aligned, hands-on, materials-rich in-school STEM programs. Between October and December, we raised 25% of the \$1.6 million catalyst investment this requires, and have already established a satellite hub on the North Shore, created two new staff positions, and hired four new instructors. By 2030, we aim to serve 120,000 children a year in their PreK - 8th grade classrooms—double our 2025 number.

In our 43rd year of service to families all over the Commonwealth and beyond, the support of our community once again affirmed that our work matters to you. Thank you to everyone on the list of donors and volunteers in this Report of Generosity. Your trust and confidence fuels this important work at a time when it is needed more than ever.

Sincerely,

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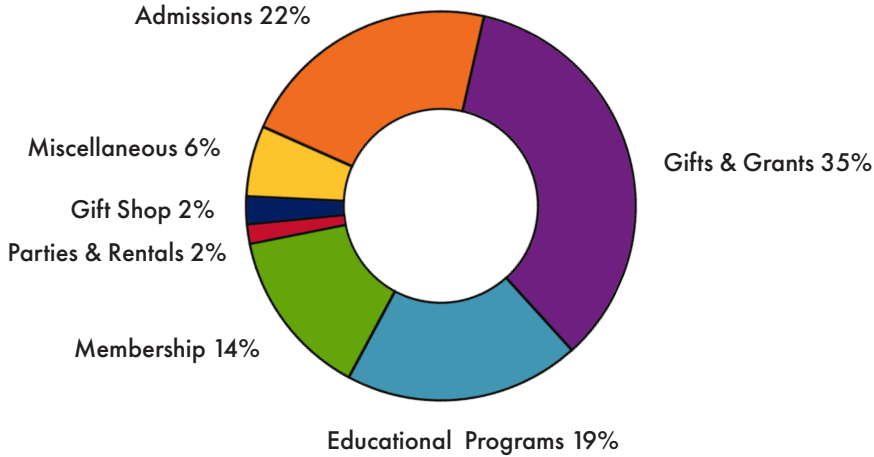
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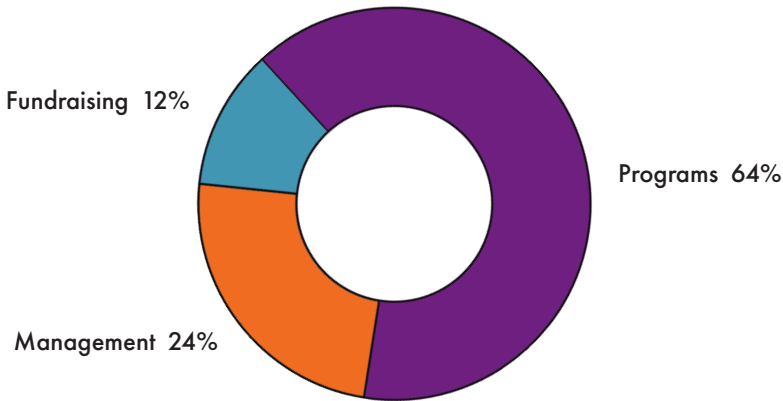


Operating Support & Revenue



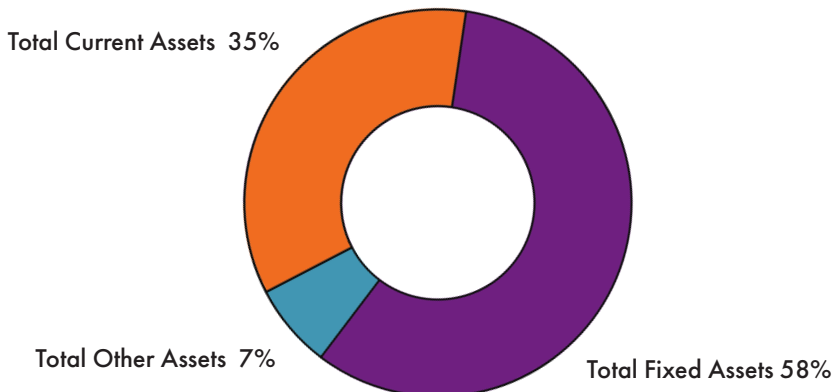
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|----------------------|--------------------|
| Gifts and Grants | \$1,482,165 |
| Admissions | \$935,555 |
| Educational Programs | \$835,610 |
| Membership | \$598,370 |
| Miscellaneous | \$250,485 |
| Gift Shop | \$98,532 |
| Parties & Rentals | \$69,810 |
| Total | \$4,270,527 |

Operating Expenses



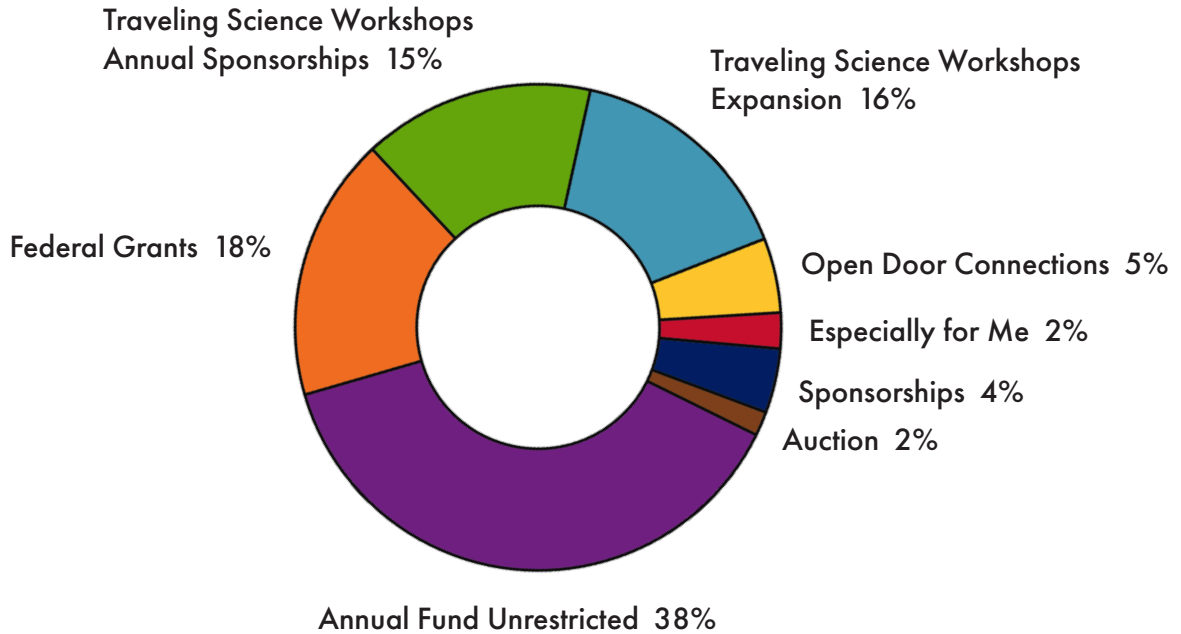
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|--------------|--------------------|
| Programs | \$2,455,650 |
| Management | \$923,393 |
| Fundraising | \$441,620 |
| Total | \$3,820,663 |

Total Liabilities & Assets



| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Fixed Assets | \$7,250,788 |
| Total Current Assets | \$4,373,917 |
| Total Other Assets | \$881,848 |
| Total Assets | \$12,506,553 |
| Total Liabilities | \$1,793,058 |
| Total Net Assets | \$10,713,495 |

What Your Gifts Supported



Annual Fund = \$1,097,343

- 726 donors
- 88% of Annual Fund gifts were under \$1,000
- 100% Board participation

Restricted Gifts = \$544,251

Projects include:

- Traveling Science Workshops expansion
- Play Inside a Solar Cell exhibit
- Staff professional development
- Administration building study

Achieved verification as a carbon neutral operation, as of December 2024!

Held our first annual Nature Play Festival, a free all-day event that engaged 3,206 visitors in outdoor exploration and play, made possible by \$30,500 in sponsorships, and included 14 vendors and 17 community partners.

Released 12 Discovery Soundbites, a podcast featuring 3-question interviews with experts on subjects that matter to kids and families.

Offered 26 free "Especially for Me" events for families and adults with disabilities, serving 2,181 visitors. Held two special events for foster families and LGBTQ+ families.

Served 26% of our visitors for free or nearly free.

Offered 302 free-with-admission public programs that served 24,835 visitors.

Installed a novel, staff-developed and professionally built exhibit, *Play Inside a Solar Cell*, to introduce the science of solar technology in a fun and interactive way.

Donated free passes and memberships valued at \$41,505 to 546 nonprofits for their fundraisers.

Secured regional and national visibility for our work, on WBZ-TV News' morning show "Levan Out Live" and WBZ radio's "Nightside with Dan Rea."

Collected, sorted, and distributed 5,064 lbs. of clothing to 938 "shoppers" at two Bessie's Closet free pop-up store events.

Served 58,851 students in their classrooms in 129 towns with hands-on Traveling Science Workshops, a 5% increase in service and expansion into 10 new towns; 15% were subsidized.



Our solar canopy generated more than enough clean energy to fully meet our campus electricity needs. The other 50% was sold at a discount to 5 other nonprofits and 11 low-income households.

Piloted a Grandparent Ambassador program to provide extra support to new parent visitors.

Raised \$1,641,594 in total, including \$1,097,343 for the Annual Fund from 726 donors—thank you!

Served 240,978 people in the Museum and in school classrooms. We've now served more than 6.25 million visitors since opening in 1982!

Expanded our work to support incarcerated caregivers with in-person parenting workshops in several MA Department of Correction facilities and a county jail.

Awarded scholarships of \$1,500 each to four high school students, chosen from 96 applicants from 40 towns.

Raised \$400,000 in the first four months of a \$1.6M campaign to double the reach of Traveling Science Workshops to serve 120,000 students per year in five years.

504 volunteers contributed their time and talent to the Museum, for a total of 4,059 hours—a 50% increase from 2024.

Collected from visitors 542 lbs. of non-perishable food for Open Table and Acton Food Pantry, 466 lbs. of diapers and hygiene supplies for First Connections, and 147 lbs. of cleaning supplies for the Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center.

Served 10,631 students and their teachers and chaperones on Field Trips to the Museum; 1,328 at a subsidized rate.

Hosted our 2nd annual STEM Career Night for teens with members of our Science and Technology Advisory Council.

Ended 2025 with 5,387 member families, a slight decrease from 2024. Of those, 1,524 are free memberships for families in need, staff, and first-time parents.

Ways to Support Discovery Museum

Online

Make a secure gift online with your credit card at discoveryacton.org/support.

By Mail

Mail your check payable to:
Discovery Museum
177 Main Street (Rte. 27)
Acton, MA 01720

Appreciated Stocks or Wire Transfers

Contact Tobey Fossey, Senior Director of Development, at tfossey@discoveryacton.org or (978) 264-4200 x 124 for our bank information and transfer instructions.

Make a Pledge

A pledge is an intention that is paid off before the end of the fiscal year on December 31, or over several fiscal years for larger gifts.

Monthly Gifts

A monthly gift is the easiest way to provide consistent support. You only need to set it up once and we do the rest! Recurring gifts can be set up through our website.

Planned Gifts

Instead of a cash donation, you can donate your assets through a variety of vehicles. We can work with you to identify the plan that will be the best fit for you and your family.

Your continued generosity allows us to **break down barriers** to discovery, **expand outreach** through our community partnerships, and **empower children** to be good stewards of the natural world and their communities.



Support Our Future. Support Their Future.

A planned gift to Discovery Museum is a lasting investment in children, families, and the power of joyful learning. By including the Museum in your will, trust, or retirement plan, you are helping to ensure that hands-on, inclusive experiences remain accessible to all children—regardless of income, background, or ability.

Planned giving is a simple way to make a lasting impact while also supporting your own financial and family goals. These gifts sustain our commitment to early childhood education, programs for children with disabilities, and a sustainable campus designed for future generations.

By making a legacy gift, you join a community of visionary supporters who believe every child deserves the chance to discover their potential.

To learn more about planning the future with us and creating your legacy, please contact:
Tobey Fossey, Senior Director of Development
(978) 264-4200, ext. 124
tfossey@discoveryacton.org

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We acknowledge the many individuals and organizations who supported Discovery Museum in 2025, 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.

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 Class of 2025 volunteers
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 Acton Lions Club
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 The Acton Woman's Club
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| Lois Taylor | Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art | Jessica Zagami |
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| Aurelie and Tom Teebagy | Wakefield Arts Council | Umair Zia and Rafia Rehman |
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| Arlene and Mel Terrasi | Waltham Cultural Council | The Zoo in Forest Park & Education Center |
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| Wendy Thomas | Bella Wang | *deceased |

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Thank you to these corporate partners for their investment and engagement, which helped advance our work in 2025.



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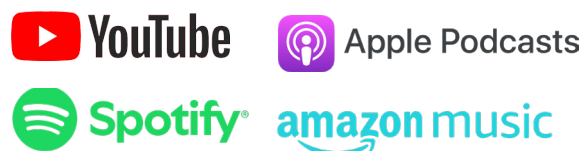


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Traveling Science Workshops Makes Major Expansion Announcement

In September, we announced an ambitious 5-year plan to double the impact of our Traveling Science Workshops school outreach program. Launched in 1992, TSW brings curiosity-driven, hands-on science experiences to 60,000 PreK - 8th grade students annually in classrooms across the region. To catalyze this growth, we launched a \$1.6 million major-gift campaign to fund the staff and infrastructure needed to extend our reach to 120,000 students per year by 2030. Importantly, our plan maintains our longtime commitment to lowering barriers to STEM learning: as we expand, we will continue providing our programs at no cost to students in under-resourced school districts. By year's end, we had raised \$400,000 from individual and foundation sources, who share our conviction that every child deserves the opportunity to become a confident and engaged STEM learner.

"With federal policy slashing public education budgets, questions about the truth of science running rampant, and an urgent need for creative, collaborative, open-minded problem-solving across our society, we believe now is the time to ramp up the reach of TSW," said Discovery Museum CEO Marie Beam. "Our open-ended workshop experiences change children's attitudes about their own capacity, their ability to 'do science' and to think scientifically—they build confidence. And because we travel to school classrooms, we can reach every student without regard to learning difference, English language fluency, disposition about science, family economic status, or access to transportation."

If you are interested in learning more or supporting this effort, please visit the Support Us page on the Discovery Museum website or contact Tobey Fossey, Senior Director of Development, at tfossey@discoveryacton.org.



Thank you to the donors who have already supported the expansion of Traveling Science Workshops:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Analog Devices Foundation | Meg Ramsey and John McCluskey |
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A Place That Grows With a Family

For more than three decades, Discovery Museum has been a place of connection and joy for Christine Hubbard and her family. Christine first began visiting the Museum in the early 1990s with her two young sons, Ned and James. Even then, when few public spaces intentionally considered the needs of children with disabilities, the Museum stood out as a place where both her boys felt welcome.

Ned, who has severe autism, is now 38 years old and lives in a group home in Westborough. Though he has limited verbal ability, he still remembers his childhood visits and often asks to “go Bessie,” recalling the beloved dinosaur that captured his imagination years ago. Those memories—and that sense of belonging—have lasted a lifetime.

Today, Ned continues to visit through the Museum’s Especially for Me program, which provides welcoming experiences for people with disabilities and their families and caregivers. The Saturday evening events are especially meaningful for Christine, giving her the opportunity to bring Ned when he is home.

For Christine, the Museum represents something rare in her son’s life: continuity. “It’s one of the few places that has been there for him from childhood through adulthood,” she says. The Museum’s open-ended, exploratory environment allows Ned to engage in ways that are not defined by chronological age. Whether he’s revisiting familiar spaces or enjoying time on the Museum’s surrounding conservation land, the experience still brings him joy.

The program’s free membership has also made a profound difference for families like Christine’s. For many parents of children with disabilities, trying new activities can feel risky—financially and emotionally. “Sometimes you have to leave after five minutes,” Christine explains. “You can’t always take that financial risk.” Knowing they could return without worry made it possible for the Hubbard family to keep coming back.

More than thirty years after their first visit, the Museum remains a place where Ned feels at home—proof that a welcoming community space can create memories and meaning that last a lifetime.

To learn more about our Especially for Me program, visit: discoveryacton.org/visit/especially-me.



Ned and James Hubbard at Discovery Museum early 1990s



Ned Hubbard at Discovery Museum at age 38



Ned and his dad at Discovery Museum

In July 2025, Discovery Museum hosted its first Annual Nature Play Festival—a free community day dedicated to helping children and families build a love for the natural world while inspiring environmental stewardship.

Despite the soaring temperatures that day, more than 3,200 attendees joined us on campus to enjoy free exploration, hands-on outdoor activities, special programs, and experiences led by our staff and community partners.



We created this event in response to a growing concern: children today are spending far less time outdoors than previous generations. Research shows that unstructured outdoor play supports children’s mental health, resilience, optimism, and even language development. When children miss these experiences—especially children from historically marginalized communities—they may feel less welcome and less comfortable in natural spaces.

At Discovery Museum, we believe that nature play should be accessible to every child. Our approach is guided by a philosophy we call “In, With, For.”

- In: We first invite children and families to simply spend time in nature.
- With: Through engaging outdoor programs, they begin to learn and grow with nature.
- For: These meaningful experiences foster appreciation and connection, ultimately inspiring advocacy for nature.

Just as we encourage families to care for the environment, we strive to model that commitment ourselves. We are proud to share that Discovery Museum is now a verified carbon-neutral organization, reflecting our dedication to environmental stewardship and a sustainable future.

Save the Date for these upcoming events in 2026:

- Bid For Kids Online Auction, May 18 – 27
- Career Night with our Science and Technology Advisory Committee, May 21
- Nature Play Festival, July 10
- Discovery After Dark, July 23
- Donor Appreciation Event, October 3



This list includes all staff employed at Discovery Museum any time January 1 through December 31, 2025.

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Superstar Volunteer!

If you've recently visited Discovery Museum, there's a good chance you've met Bette. In 2025, Bette Hess volunteered more than 200 hours with our Visitor Services and Public Programs staff, generously giving her time to welcome guests, engage families, and share the wonder of Discovery with all. What's more, since 2020, Bette has volunteered more than 1,000 hours with the Museum! The next time you see her un-jamming tubes in the AirPlay Gallery or serving up dinner in Bessie's Diner, please join us in saying a warm and heartfelt: **Thank you, Bette!**



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*

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