the Kansas Children's DISCOVERU Center

Annual Report 2022

Building a stable foundation for a future of play.

The Discovery Center welcomed our 800,000th all-time visitor to the museum this year, and set a new all-time single day attendance record with 1,152 visitors. These attendance milestones were a harbinger of a pandemic recovery that has put the museum back on stable footing, ready to serve as a community anchor.

The year has been a critical time to step in to support families. Access programs that provide free and discounted admission now account for more than a third of admissions. The museum worked to meet the unique needs of refugee families, children with incarcerated caregivers, and others, recognizing that every child deserves rich and diverse museum experiences.

Pillars of Play

The Discovery Center was featured on multiple national stages for innovation in access programming and exhibit design, helping attract record numbers of out-of-town visitors to Shawnee County and promoting Topeka as a top city to live, work, and most importantly—play.





Profoundly committed to equity and inclusion, the Discovery Center works zealously to identify and remove barriers to high-quality play experiences. *Learn more on pages 3-4*



Educational Laboratory

The museum is designed with the whole child in mind. We value children as our world's most important citizens. Our child-led play experiences facilitate early learning. *Learn more on page 5*



Play Activators

We are committed to working outside our walls, fostering a culture of play that places children at the center of the community and honors the way in which they learn and grow. *Learn more on page 6*



Sustainable Nonprofit

The Discovery Center uses a decision-making model that emphasizes the long-term sustainability of the organization, while ensuring the mission of the museum is at the forefront of all work. *Learn more on pages 7-10* Profoundly committed to equity and inclusion, the Discovery Center works zealously to identify and remove barriers to play.

Advocates for Children

The Discovery Center is committed to stepping up to ensure every child has rich and diverse museum experiences.

In 2022, more than 1 in 3 Discovery Center admissions were free or donor-subsidized. These admissions included *Museums for All* visitors from families receiving food stamps or WIC, families with subsidized memberships, and field trip visitors from schools with a high percentage of children receiving free or reduced-cost lunches.

Special programs serve children with incarcerated mothers, medically fragile children, children with autism and foster families. Access Highlight: Support for Ukrainian Refugee Families

12 free family memberships 87 festival attendees

The conflict in Ukraine has caused millions of people, mostly women and children, to flee their homes. Refugees who have settled in Topeka were offered free Discovery Center memberships, and the museum hosted a St. Nicholas Day Children's Festival for the families to bring a sense of normalcy to children experiencing unparalleled uncertainty and trauma.



Community for Kids

230 attended A free pop-up peaceful play event with community resources in response to the Uvalde tragedy.

Discovery Kindergarten

4 camp sessions, 1 fair 93 families served A free community-wide initiative to have every child ready for school.

Medical Warriors

Museums for All

Increases access to

finances are never a

barrier to play.

low-income families so

1.859 admissions

66 served

Honors medically fragile children, or those battling life-limiting illnesses, who need free, private play time and accommodations.

Play Free

253 served Helps children with incarcerated caregivers get the love and support they need to heal. In 2022, this program returned to in-person sessions with record attendance.

Free Nights

3,074 served Unites the whole community in play and learning at no cost to families.

Sensory-Friendly Sundays

160 served Provides children with autism and their families with a safe and understanding place to play at no cost.

Foster Families

150 free memberships 4 STEAM Camps Supports children in foster care with free family memberships and summer science camps.

Educational Laboratory

At the Museum

The museum acts as an incubator and innovator, designed with the whole child in mind. We value children as our world's most important citizens. Our child-led play experiences facilitate critical learning and social skill development. New play experiences created in 2022 included:



Topeka Dino Days Spring 2022

A community-wide celebration of dinosaurs, including a dinosaur egg exhibit that hatched imagination.



New Year's Pavilion Winter 2022

Installation of a pavilion showcasing Chinese architecture to ignite cultural curiosity and outdoor exploration.



STEM Play Workshops Summer 2022

An in-house-created exhibit promoting women in science, now being replicated across America.



Learn to Earn Bank Winter 2022

A mechanical and kinesthetic exploration of currency that promotes educational savings for families.

Community Play Activators



Outreach Highlight: Mobile Museum serves record numbers in 5th year

The Mobile Museum delivers STEAM-based educational play in parks, schools and neighborhoods. Launched in 2018, the museum has served more than 15,000 people at 92 events, 29 of which took place in 2022. The museum has pulled into Hays, Dodge City, Nicodemus, Kansas City and everywhere in between, bringing communities together with the power of play.

Growing demand for the Mobile Museum means the colorful van and trailer will likely be replaced with a larger vehicle capable of transporting serious fun to even more communities. The museum is much more than a building. We are committed to fostering a culture of play that places children at the center of the community and honors the way in which they learn and grow.

We provide ongoing education and opportunities for play experiences to come to life outside our walls. From school gyms, to local parks, to online classrooms—we take play on the road.

Photgraph courtesy of Geary County Schools, USD 475

Mobile Museum

Serves families in outreach events across the state of Kansas, where visitors can build, paint and play.

Corporate Play Days

Promotes the power of play for all ages with facilitated, play-based team-building for former children.

STEAM Ahead to Discovery Library Kits



Museum educators produce STEAM-based literacy and learning kits in partnership with

the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. Families check out play activities and guides to accompany books. A total of 720 kits have been produced in the past two years.

Sustainability

The Discovery Center has grown and thrived by operating sustainably, while ensuring the needs of children are at the forefront of our work. The museum set a new all-time single day attendance record on March 17, 2022 with 1,152 visitors.

The museum also made major strides towards long-term growth in 2022 with the Vote Gage Park ballot initiative, a sales tax that will help fund capital expenses and traveling exhibits at the museum starting in 2023. Everyday operations and many programs will still be funded by a combination of museum revenue and generous donor support.

How is the Discovery Center Funded?

- Admissions
- Memberships
- Field Trips
- Discovery Shop Sales
- Donations
- Paid Partnerships
- Sponsorships

Top sponsorships included the military discount, which served 1,379 military members and their families, and free nights, which served 3,047 people.

Volunteers are a critical part of museum operations

At the

Museum

In Our Community

Economic Impact









Community Anchor

The Discovery Center had 91,213 visitors in 2022 for innovative learning and play experiences. Nationally, museums generate more than \$50 billion in direct and indirect spending (AAM).

Tourist Attraction

More than 1 in 4 museum visitors live outside Shawnee County, making the museum a major tourist attraction and driver of tourism spending. The museum generates more than 25,000 out-of-town visitors annually.

Quality of Place

We love Topeka. Establishing quality of place and community pride for the next generation of Topekans is an intentional part of our work and drives our outreach, exhibit design and programming.

Cradle to Career

We are engaging the next generation of dreamers and leaders in science, technology, engineering, art and math through quality STEAM play.

2022 Revenue | \$1,428,698.14*

Key Revenue Numbers

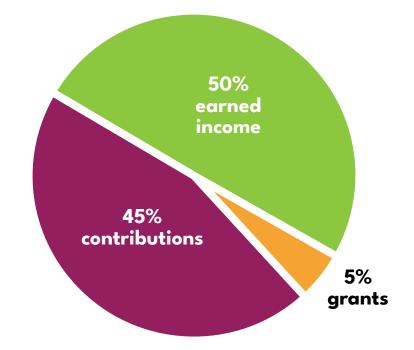
91,213 total visitors

1,830 member families

6,870 field trip students

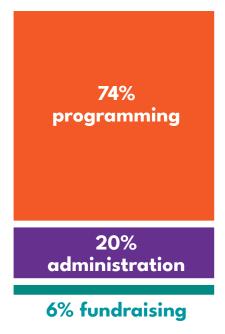
81 birthday parties

\$181,340 raised at Evening of Discovery Gala



2022 Expenses | \$1,305,312.20*





* unaudited financials



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