

STEAM Learning and Discovery



BOSTON
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT
2018

Engaging Children in the Excitement and Rewards of STEAM

Few children have the opportunity to experience the processes of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) in a hands-on way that emphasizes open-ended discovery and experimentation. They may not have access to tools or technology, or have the support of adults or the formal education environment. Through recent initiatives, and our long history as an institution that has exposed children to science, we know children can get excited about STEAM subjects when given the opportunity.

Since 2014, Boston Children's Museum has launched several initiatives to deliver hands-on STEAM learning and discovery experiences for our visitors. These include a Maker Workshop Pilot, organizing and hosting three Boston Mini Maker Faire events, partnering with Einstein's Workshop to offer paid hands-on STEAM workshops, launching our Tech Kitchen program that provides interaction with local tech innovators and their products, and creating a new STEAM workshop space where we conduct hands-on, minds-on programming. These initiatives complement existing Museum exhibits in the sciences such as *Investigate*, *Bubbles*, and *Raceways*.



Science

Technology

Engineering

Art/Design

Math

STEAM subject matter infused with an informal, hands-on, playful approach, emphasizing creativity and experimenting, makes these subjects accessible and fun.

STEAM Discovery Continuum

Boston Children's Museum's vision for STEAM learning is a developmental continuum that spans ages, tools, challenges, and skills. Core to the experience is a multisensory environment —where the child leads but is supported by parents, caregivers, and Museum staff—that offers different paths of open-ended discovery. The opportunities for creative expression are facilitated using both low-tech and high-tech tools to complete projects or challenges, but the central driver of the vision is the importance of rich interactions with other children, parents, Museum staff, and academic and corporate experts to create a collaborative, creative STEAM learning environment. The goal is a series of progressive encounters with STEAM, building excitement and interest, and creating a pipeline to future education and careers in the sciences.

Age: Younger → Older

Tools: Simple → Complex

Challenges: Directed → Open-ended

Skills: Novice → Sophisticated



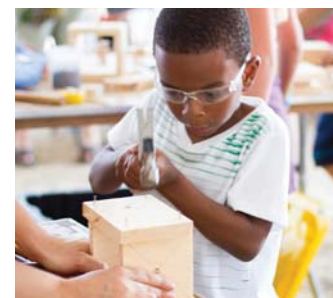
Early childhood explorations engage all the senses and stimulate cognitive development.



Involved adults build confident children willing to take on challenges.



Access to new technologies helps kids stay abreast with their peers.



Creating things introduces new tools and uses all the senses for problem solving.



Multidisciplinary opportunities foster creative expression and new perspectives.



Rich interactions with mentors cultivate communication and collaboration.



Sharing results and ideas starts a new cycle of ideation and invention.



Inspired kids become STEAM problem solvers, and they pursue STEAM education and careers.

Delivering Innovative STEAM Experiences



Boston Children's Museum was founded in 1913 by the Science Teachers Foundation. Since then, the Museum has been helping children develop the habits of mind associated with critical thinking and problem solving. The current breadth of the Museum's STEAM offerings is significant. Taking this current platform of exhibits, programs, special events, STEAM education content, and online digital resources to the next level will allow the Museum to engage older children and their families more deeply in STEAM.

Exhibits

Museum exhibits introduce children to STEAM concepts such as gravity, motion, and math from the earliest ages in hands-on, fun ways.

Programs

Staff-led programs cover a broad range of STEAM topics on a daily basis, engaging young people in the wonders of science.

Special Events

Special events bring together young learners around STEAM programs including Google Geek Street and Boston Mini Maker Faire.

External STEAM Education

The Museum disseminates STEAM learning materials to schools, libraries, and museums through programs such as Race to the Top.

Websites/Digital

The Museum extends the reach of its content through websites including *Beyond the Chalkboard*, *My Sky*, and *School Readiness*.

Investigate, Bubbles, PlaySpace, Construction Zone, Johnny's Workbench, Raceways, My Sky, and Countdown to Kindergarten. Science Saturday, Critter Day, WGBH NOVA Making Stuff, Chemistry Day, Kitchen Science, Sense of Smell Day, Environment, and Einstein's Workshop. Boston Mini Maker Faire, Google Geek Street, Engineering Week, Macrophotography Workshop, and National Grid Tinker Tent. Race to the Top and National Grid STEM Guide and Kit. MySkyExhibit.org, BeyondtheChalkboard.org, and School Readiness.

STEAM 2.0

Boston Children's Museum's STEAM 2.0 initiative extends the Museum's current STEAM platform by expanding the space, technology, and staff dedicated to STEAM. The most critical component of the initiative has been the investment in dedicated staff, including a new STEAM director. Key elements of the initiative are foreseen to be a dedicated STEAM studio; new technology and materials; special events, including an annual Boston Maker Faire; instructor-led, computer-based workshops on topics such as stop-motion animation and Lego robotics; instructor-supported programming in cross-discipline subject matter such as music, art, design, photography, chemistry, and robotics; and Tech Kitchen, a prototype studio for local technology companies to show new products, receive feedback, and share expertise with visitors.

STEAM Studio

A 3,800-square-foot hands-on immersive maker space with tools, digital technology, and dedicated staff.

Maker Faire

Boston Mini Maker Faire, hosted and organized by Boston Children's Museum and sponsored by major technology organizations.

Tech Kitchen

A prototype studio for local technology companies to show new products, receive feedback, and share expertise with visitors.

Hands-on Workshops

Instructor-led workshops that offer young learners unique opportunities to use software, 3-D printers, and Legos to explore engineering concepts.

Open-ended Exploration

Everyday opportunities to explore and engage in instructor-supported STEAM projects.

Special Events

Special events, through partnerships with leaders in the industry, that offer visitors the chance to see new technology and meet the people behind it.

Staff Leadership

STEAM mentors who love science, learning, sharing their knowledge, and finding new ways to make science fun!



Year in Review

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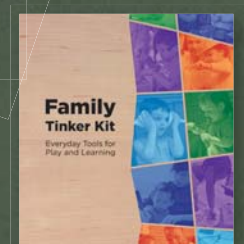
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LUNCH LEARN

Psychologist and researcher Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek speaks on "Becoming Brilliant: Reimagining Education for Our Time."

Sponsored and presented by Citizens Bank, *Money Matters* is a festival of playful learning experiences that promote financial literacy and intergenerational conversations about earning, spending, saving, and sharing money.



With support from National Grid, the Museum develops the STEM-focused Family Tinker Kit program, which trains education, museum, and library professionals. Nearly 700 kits are distributed, reaching 23,707 children in Massachusetts.



4,592 people attend five Grown-Ups Museum nights.



400 supporters gather at the annual Wonder Ball fundraiser and raise almost \$600,000 to support Museum programs.



2,392 attend 19 performances of *Seussical* the musical presented exclusively for the Museum by Wheelock Family Theatre.



Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Shawn Colvin performs songs from her new album *The Starlighter* in the Museum's KidStage Theater.



300 guests attend the second annual children's gala, the Silly Soirée.



The Museum's Boston Marathon team of Tami Vazzana, Keana Saxon, and Julian DeOliveira raise over \$41,145 to support the Museum.



The second annual *Star Wars* weekend entertains all Jedi warriors.



Stories come alive through music, storytelling, improv, wordplay, and costumed characters in a celebration of children's literacy during April school vacation week.



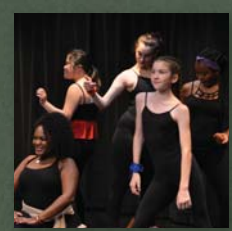
Children bring their capes and costumes and meet their superheroes on Superhero Weekend!



Wish You Were Here: Greetings from the Galápagos, an immersive video installation by Allison Maria Rodriguez, explores climate change, species extinction, and the interconnectivity of all existence on our planet Earth.

JULY 1, 2017

JUNE 30, 2018



Morningstar Access

3,863 visitors participate in the Museum's year-round programs for children with special or medical needs.

The Museum hosts the first-ever Boston Youth Dance Festival. More than 90 youth dancers representing five dance companies perform at the Museum, sharing their passion for dance with Museum visitors.



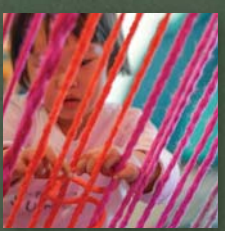
2,170 people and over 100 maker exhibitors attend the second Boston Mini Maker Faire event held at the Museum.



The Museum partners with Science City in Kansas City, Missouri, to plan and design 10,000 square feet of early childhood learning exhibits.



The Museum opens its annual *Snowmazing!* Winter celebration, highlighted by U.S. hockey Olympian Jordan Greenway doing the ribbon-cutting on the Museum's indoor sock skating rink.



The Gallery exhibit *Lineplay: Taut/Slack*, created by artist and educator Samantha Fields, combines knitting, ceramics, and weaving, and invites visitors to work with their hands to make something.

Supported by National Grid, the Museum launches its new Tech Kitchen program that features a wide range of hands-on STEAM activities including staff-led workshops and interaction with local tech innovators.



Boston Baroque opens its new Classics for Kids music series at the Museum.



Over five days the Museum celebrates Lunar New Year through dance, games, and art with a focus on Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese traditions.



The Museum launches the redesigned *Boston Stories* website (BCMStories.com) that tells the story of the transformational period from 1960 to 1990 in the Museum's history.



70 members of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra perform a short concert for Boston Children's Museum visitors.



Outside In/Inside Out, a Gallery exhibit created by Meaghan Schwelm, explores the artist's personal and evolving relationship with the natural world.



Jeri Robinson, vice president of early childhood initiatives, is awarded the inaugural Champion of the Field Award by the Association of Children's Museums (ACM). This new award is given to an individual who has dedicated their life to the betterment of children and families and has made an indelible impact on the field.

R i d e

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Facts and Figures

554,641 | 13,703

Visitors to Boston Children's Museum

Museum members

699 | 25,103 | 178

National Grid-sponsored STEM learning Family Tinker Kits distributed

Children visiting the Museum as part of a school, camp, or community group

Birthday parties celebrated at the Museum

3,863 | 24 | 7,401

Visitors taking part in the Museum's special needs programs

Tech Kitchen programs

Visitors to Free Fun Fridays celebration sponsored by Highland Street Foundation

42 | 1,968 | 7,623

Visiting artist workshops

Attendees to the annual Countdown to Kindergarten celebration

Attendees to Museum Music and Movement classes

2,170 | 2,392 | 226

Maker Faire participants

Attendees to 19 performances of *Seussical* presented exclusively for the Museum by Wheelock Family Theater

Live music and dance performances

51 | 51,310 | 3,090

Corporate and private events

Target \$1 Friday Night visitors

School group students visiting the *Japanese House* exhibit

57,367 | 4,592 | 22

Attendees to *KidStage* performances

Attendees to Boston Grown-Ups Museum nights

Critter Days

80

STEAM-focused programs and workshops



Chairman & President's Message



Dear Friends,

We have been gifted with another successful year of joyful discovery for children and families, and we are proud that this great Museum continues to perform robustly and be a strong advocate for children.

In 2018, we welcomed over 550,000 visitors to the Museum, and we reached many thousands more in Massachusetts and around the globe through our traveling exhibits, teacher kits, Beyond the Chalkboard program, and design and consulting services. We have expanded the age range of children reached through a new initiative on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) comprising a new STEAM studio space, management, staff, and programming.

Equally important, during this increasingly divisive period, the Boston Children's Museum remains steadfast in advocating for the well-being of children and families everywhere—regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. It is critical that we speak up on behalf of those who are vulnerable, and we encourage you to join us in this important pursuit.

*“While we try to teach our children all about life,
our children teach us what life is all about.”*

—Angela Schwindt

We continue to lead in early childhood development, and we also learn from children through our many interactions. So, we have taken a page from their playbook and focused on two themes that stand apart from the rest. First, children experiment—a lot! They dig in the dirt and contemplate the reflection of the clouds in rain puddles. Second, they are creative: Where adults see an empty cardboard box, they see a rocket ship for launching to explore faraway places. Following this spirit, we have begun implementing a cultural shift toward experimentation and creativity by dedicating a subset of our time, space, and budget to experimenting across all facets of the Museum—be it exhibit development, program design, or visitor experience. Among numerous initiatives, is the Napkin Proposal program, where any staff member can submit suggestions regardless of their department, so that ideas are free-flowing and open to all, and management then finds resources to test and bring these ideas to reality.

As we celebrate our rich history and strong foundational capabilities, we are also embracing the future and expanding our reach beyond the Museum walls through BCM NEXT, an initiative to identify next-generation solutions that reach more children and families with innovative programs, exhibits, and learning resources. The first step in expanding our reach was the Boston Mini Maker Faire, which encourages children to practice their creativity in both the physical world and technological realm. Furthermore, we have successfully qualified for grants and sponsorships to forge ahead on reaching children through collaboration with local libraries, augmented reality innovations, and in many other ways. You will notice that we have refreshed our logo to better reflect our mission as we expand our reach to serve many more children and families. These are exciting times at the Museum and we will keep you posted as we make progress on multiple fronts and build a sustainable future.

There are more than a billion children on our planet, and each one, regardless of economic or geographic situation, should have the opportunity to learn, explore, and connect with their world. Accomplishing our mission of joyful discovery for children and families would not be possible without the ongoing commitment of our staff, management, board, donors, and community partners. We thank you for being a part of our rich history, vibrant present, and bright future!

Carole Charnow
President & CEO

Nirav Dagli
Board Chair

Operating Results

INCOME

| | FY 2018* | FY 2017 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Gifts, contributions & grants | \$ 2,585,835 | \$ 3,763,177 |
| Admissions | 3,496,519 | 3,311,551 |
| Property revenue | 2,290,904 | 2,401,725 |
| Memberships | 1,557,814 | 1,552,628 |
| Other income | 1,036,245 | 1,092,425 |
| Support from endowment | 706,482 | 720,299 |
| TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE & SUPPORT | \$ 11,673,799 | \$ 12,841,805 |

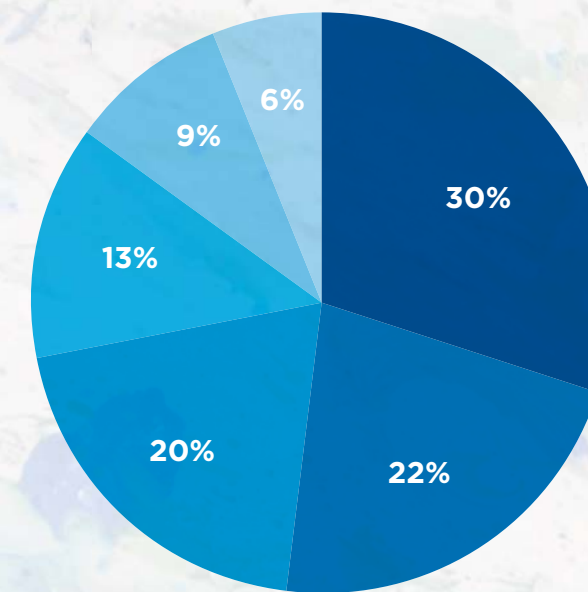
EXPENSES

| | FY 2018* | FY 2017 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Program services: | | |
| Visitor services | \$ 2,677,576 | \$ 2,442,376 |
| Museum programs | 2,019,870 | 1,929,139 |
| Exhibits | 955,884 | 1,092,939 |
| Member services | 273,825 | 255,977 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES | \$ 5,927,155 | \$ 5,720,431 |
| Support services: | | |
| Building operating costs | \$ 1,588,183 | \$ 1,417,833 |
| General & administrative | 987,903 | 1,022,481 |
| Fundraising | 854,825 | 706,413 |
| Marketing | 684,537 | 639,928 |
| TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES | \$ 4,115,448 | \$ 3,786,655 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 10,042,603 | \$ 9,507,086 |
| NET SURPLUS BEFORE DEPRECIATION & INTEREST | \$ 1,631,196 | \$ 3,334,719 |
| Depreciation | \$ 2,300,776 | \$ 2,510,896 |
| Interest | 412,070 | 424,868 |
| TOTAL DEPRECIATION & INTEREST | \$ 2,712,846 | \$ 2,935,764 |
| NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) | (\$ 1,081,650) | \$ 398,955 |

INVESTMENTS AT MARKET VALUE

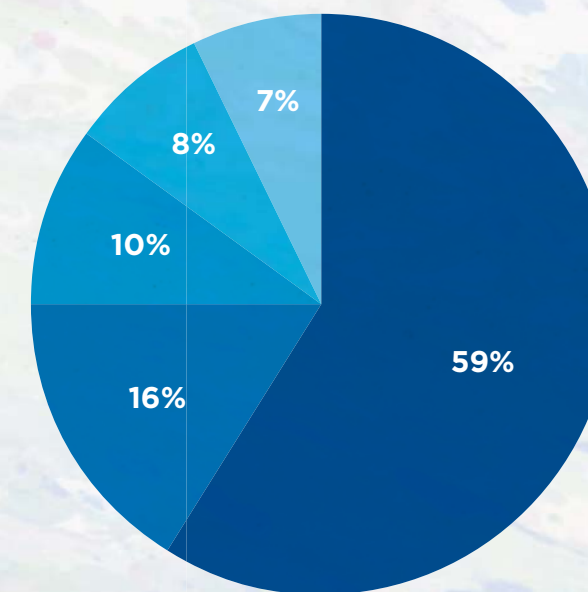
| | FY 2018* | FY 2017 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Beginning balance | \$ 15,891,565 | \$ 14,788,889 |
| Contributions/other changes, net | 832,606 | 108,385 |
| Spending policy transfer | (706,482) | (720,299) |
| Net unrealized/realized gains (losses) | 376,935 | 1,714,590 |
| TOTAL INVESTMENTS | \$ 16,394,624 | \$ 15,891,565 |

* Preliminary, unaudited results.



FISCAL 2018 INCOME*

- Admissions
- Gifts, contributions & grants
- Property revenue
- Memberships
- Other income
- Support from endowment



FISCAL 2018 EXPENSES*

- Program services
- Building operating costs
- General & administrative
- Fundraising
- Marketing

FY18 Financial Summary

Boston Children's Museum is pleased to report another year of solid financial results. Fiscal year 2018 operations continued to focus on efforts to draw new and expanded audiences to the Museum through a variety of interesting and fun programs and events. Our community engagement projects expanded, bringing informal education kits and programs to libraries and community centers across Massachusetts. In addition, fundraising for two future exhibits, *PlaySpace* and *Our City*, significantly advanced, with design and development work quickly progressing.

Programming was enhanced to support our goals to provide everyday amazing experiences and to continually create innovative and exciting destination events that attract new and repeat visitors. During the year, we increased our investment in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), opening a dedicated space for STEAM workshops and programs and hiring new leadership. As part of this initiative, and with support from some key donors, we launched Tech Kitchen, a program that regularly hosts local entrepreneurs, established tech companies, and start-ups, and we presented our own staff-led programs, allowing visitors to be hands-on with real-world STEAM products and applications. During the year, 24 Tech Kitchen events were conducted as well as 80 STEAM-focused programs and workshops.

For the fiscal period ending June 30, 2018, before the inclusion of depreciation expense, the Museum ended the year in the black, as is our annual overall objective. Income from these new events and programs increased during the fiscal year, and management was especially mindful to ensure that our admission and membership revenue was stable. To that end, we were pleased with a 5.6 percent and a 0.3 percent increase, respectively. While gifts, contributions, and grants were down compared with fiscal 2017, two things are important to note: first, over \$1 million in fiscal 2017 gifts was actually dedicated to be spent in FY18-19; and second, fiscal 2018 resulted in an increase in unrestricted giving over fiscal 2017, primarily due to new support we received for our annual fund and our gala.

As part of our internal risk management initiatives, we completed a vulnerability assessment related to how climate change and rising sea levels will affect our building and property. Our location at the mouth of the Fort Point Channel makes us especially exposed to the vagaries of the weather, and we are incorporating sustainability measures into all property management initiatives we employ. We are also well-entrenched in exploring the design and cost of creating a sustaining environment on our property. This work is an essential part of the Museum's long-term outlook.

Finally, the financial markets were strong this year, and the investment portfolio grew 3.17 percent year-to-year, after drawing the approved spending policy of 4.5 percent. The board closely monitors the Museum's portfolio and was satisfied with the results.

Thanks to a dedicated and imaginative staff, the Museum is able to continually refresh its approach to meeting the evolving needs of families and children. And thanks to all our funders and friends, we are able to ensure we sustain our solid financial condition.

— Amy Auerbach, Senior Vice President & CFO

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