

# THE CURIOSITY PLACE



GREAT LAKES  
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

powered by

## 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT





## Dear Friends and Supporters,

**This past year has been one of bold moves and exciting milestones for the Great Lakes Children's Museum.**

In October 2024, we relocated to the Grand Traverse Mall, and by November we opened the doors to **The Curiosity Place!** We welcomed visitors to a **fresh slate of exhibits**—each one thoughtfully developed with input from the community and designed to spark curiosity, creativity, and connection.

From day one, we've been listening closely to visitor feedback. Our guests told us they wanted more immersive, hands-on opportunities  
**—and we delivered.**

With each new exhibit—from pollinators and local ecosystems to the science of flight—we're offering opportunities for children to **step away from the screens** and into a world of play, discovery, and learning at The Curiosity Place!

Whether it's the launch of our **Science Saturdays**, the introduction of the **Curiosity Vet Clinic**, or the installation of our new **Pollinator Maze**, every step we've taken is rooted in our mission to create brain-building experiences that inspire children and families alike.



***None of this would be possible without your support.***

**Thank you for helping us grow.  
We're just getting started.**

*Tracie MacPherson*

Tracie MacPherson  
Executive Director  
Great Lakes Children's Museum  
[www.greatlakeskids.org](http://www.greatlakeskids.org)

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## NEW EXHIBITS

We launched our new space with a fresh collection of exhibits - each one shaped by community input and built to inspire curiosity, creativity, and meaningful connection.





OUR NEW  
LOCATION  
HAS IMPROVED  
ACCESS!



40,000+  
Annual  
Visitors

A significant **25%**  
increase over the  
previous year.

665,900+ GUESTS IN 25 YEARS =  
A LEGACY OF LEARNING  
THROUGH PLAY.

## PLUS PROGRAM

*Our PLUS Program helps ensure every child can experience the wonder of the Museum—regardless of their family's income—by providing access and opportunities for all.*

We're proud to offer reduced-cost memberships through our PLUS access programs, and we've seen a **60%** increase in enrollment and return visits from participating families.

904

Current active  
memberships  
(including 368 PLUS)

3,789

active members  
(including 1,767 PLUS)

**More than just a museum, we are becoming a true community gathering place—a place where children build critical thinking skills, caregivers connect, and joyful memories are made.**

#### **Largest Free Playgroup**

In partnership with Great Start Collaborative, we host the 5toOne playgroup—the region's largest free parent support group—fostering child development and strong community connections among families.

#### **Affordable Space**

Our new expanded space has welcomed over 80 families for birthday parties and events—offering a fun, affordable place for kids to celebrate and families to connect.

#### **Mobile Museum Impact**

In the past year, 1,420 people experienced the magic of the Mobile Museum—through painted fish, stomped rockets, dissected owl pellets, and hands-on activities that sparked curiosity and joy.

#### **New Website Launch**

In response to visitor feedback, we launched a new, more interactive website to make planning your visit easier than ever. The updated site features improved navigation, a streamlined ticketing experience, and up-to-date information about exhibits, programs, and events—helping families connect, explore, and play with ease.

#### **Guided Discovery**

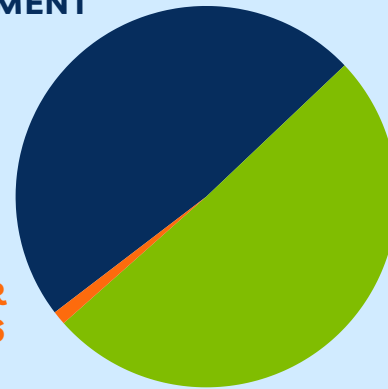
Through hands-on activities like First Step Science and Kid's Craft Lab, children and their families explored, created, and learned together—reaching 1,235 participants with educator-led developmentally appropriate, curiosity driven experiences.

## **FINANCIALS 2024-2025**

### **OPERATING REVENUE \$512,263**

**DEVELOPMENT  
\$247,397**

**OTHER  
\$5,996**



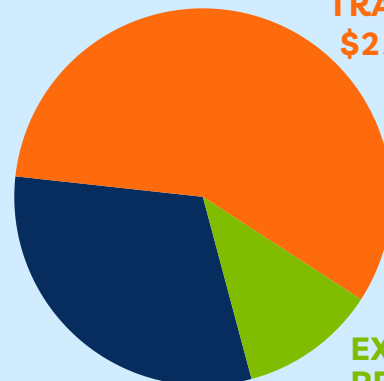
**EARNED INCOME  
\$258,870**

### **OPERATING EXPENSES \$448,660**

**WAGES AND  
TRAINING  
\$257,590**

**OPERATIONS  
\$138,643**

**EXHIBITS,  
PROGRAMS,  
EVENTS  
\$52,470**







**The Great Lakes Children's Museum is our go-to spot for imagination, play, and connection.**

**We often leave with new friends and big smiles. Thank you for creating such a special place!**

*~GLCM Member*



“

**Sometimes it's the little things a kid remembers and looks for every time they come back.**

*~GLCM Member*



**My 4-year-old became a pilot, pirate, and superhero—all in one visit.**

**It's fun, educational, and always fresh thanks to the rotating exhibits.**

*~GLCM Member*





## A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

**The community is excited about the Great Lakes Children's Museum's next chapter. There's strong support for a refreshed vision—with new leadership, updated space, and expanded programming. Partners and donors recognize the Museum's potential to meet the needs of children, families, and STEM education, and they're ready to help it grow.**

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### Foundation Support

Art and Mary Schmuckal Family Foundation, Eagles for Children, The Charles M Bauervic Foundation, The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Les & Ann Biederman Foundation, Friendly Garden Club, Michigan Arts and Culture Council, Northwest Michigan Arts and Culture Network, Oleson Foundation, Polk Family Foundation, Rotary Charities, Tuktawa Foundation, and Zonta Club of Traverse City

### Business Support

Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Efulfillment Services, East Bay Pet Hospital, The Friendly Garden Club of Traverse City, Family Fare/Spartan Nash, Grand Bay Moving & Storage, Hagerty Management, Kuhn Rogers, PLC, Max's Service, Michigan Education Trust, MSU Federal Credit Union, Northwest Education Services, Northwestern Michigan College—College for Kids, Old Town Playhouse, Oakshores, Old Mission Women's Club, Pet Supplies Plus of Traverse City, Precision Plumbing and Heating, Potthoff Eyecare & Surgery, Rehmann Group, Sherwin Williams, Strathmore Real Estate Group, TBA Credit Union, Two Son's Pizza, and VCA Animal Hospital

### Individual Support

Dean Anagnost, Jim Bach, Mike Baker & Denine Dingman, Deb Bellor, Teresa Beamsley, Brian Blood, Rosa Breneman, Dotty Brown, Susan Burks, Bill & Jeanne Dennler, Mel & Elizabeth Drumm, Dave Gregory, Shana Grife, Loretta Grossnickle, Gregory Hagan, Agnes Hayden, Kandace Heck, Ashley Hieronimus, Jim & Diana Huckle, Karen Johnson, Nathan Kessler, Deb Kaczynski, Stuart Kelly, Amy Labadie, Jamie & Beau Lamont, Douglas Luciani, Christopher Mausolf, Tammy & Richard Mitchell, Chris & Vita Morse, Ken & Pat Musson, Kevin Parker, Nathan Parker, Richard & Odile Perry, Bill Pierce, Jeanne Piche, George Prewitt, Catherine Phillips, Shaun Ramsey, Jerold Ring, Tom Rochford, Spencer Silk, Barbara Dean Smith, Brian & Stephanie Slawnik, Kelly Schrag, Rachel Timmons, Terry Tarrow, Martha Topol & David Kirby, Steve & Linda Wade, Erika Walsh, Sarah White, and Alexis Wittman



*The Great Lakes Children's Museum is a 501(c)(3) that relies on generous donations. Thank you to every individual, business, and foundation that has made our work possible.*

## BOARD

### President

Mel Drumm

### Executive Committee

Terry Beamsley, Jerry Ring, Spencer Silk

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Cheryl Bloomquist, Steve Bulger, Dr. Jeanne Dennler, David Glenn, Camille Hoisington, Stuart Kelly, Philip Leete, and Judge Jennifer Whitten

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### Jordan Shell

Membership & Development  
Coordinator

### Jamie Cousert

Guest Services Assistant

### Rachel Levine

Guest Services & Media  
Coordinator

### Melissa Schrock

Summer Camp Coordinator



**Thank you to our volunteers who logged countless hours to move us from one location to the next and to all of our program volunteers!**

## SO MANY VOLUNTEERS!



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## VISIT US!

**Whether you're piloting a helicopter, embarking on a make-believe adventure through the forests of Northern Michigan, or stepping into the role of a veterinarian, our exhibits spark imagination, encourage exploration, and inspire playful learning at every turn!**

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