

## Annual Report

DECEMBER 2020 — 2021



For the Nature Museum, 2021 was a year like no other. Coming out of the most challenging times ever in 2020, very little seemed certain or predictable. So how did we do? Collectively we rose to the occasion and met every challenge. Our resilient and talented staff showed up, worked hard and made it possible to run our Young Naturalist Preschool, Nature Camp, Homeschool Naturalists, Grasshopper Grove, several weekend family programs, and in the summer

we reopened the Wildlife Education Center (our animal collection) to the public on Saturdays and Sundays!

And more than that our members, families, and the local community stayed with us through thick and thin. When we had to make tough Covid-19 decisions and adjustments, you rolled with the punches and helped carry us through. Our fantastic board members supported us with open wallets, big hearts, strong backs, and great ideas.

As we come to the end of 2021 we are excited and positive about the future, and believe 2022 will reward us all with a return to more normal times. We ask that you take a few minutes to read our annual report, and if the spirit moves you, donate to our Year End Appeal using the enclosed envelope or by giving online via the Donate Now button on our homepage. Your gift will help the Nature Museum provide children outstanding environmental education and nature play opportunities for years to come.

Sincerely,

Tom Bregman, Executive Director

Steve Bywater, Board Chair



## NATURALISTS IN NEWBURGH

Throughout 2021 many of our conversations at HHNM have centered on increasing access to nature education for diverse audiences. We believe that nature is for everyone and want our programming to embody this ideal! Thanks to generous support from Hudson Valley Credit Union and the Malcolm Gordon Charitable Fund, we were able to offer free programs at two locations in the city of Newburgh — Newburgh Naturalists at the Newburgh Armory Unity Center and Knee High Naturalists at the Newburgh Free Library — which removed one obstacle faced by children and families.



Adam Rettus-Sissler, who led the eight week Newburgh Naturalists program, welcomed the chance to teach kids about finding nature in their own neighborhood, saying, “We tend to think of nature education as taking place in the woods or on a trail, but nature is everywhere and nature education should be, too!”

In the year ahead, we will continue to seek partnerships and funding opportunities that allow us to expand our programming in Newburgh and other underserved communities, an initiative our Board of Trustees fully supports. “The expansion of HHNM’s programs into Newburgh is a wonderful thing. The kids’ faces absolutely light up when they meet animals, learn about plants, and find out more about the natural world. It will be exciting to see these programs grow!” says Board Secretary Paul Stermer.

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## RENOVATIONS

If you have visited the Outdoor Discovery Center recently, you may have noticed some changes around the property. Drawing on donations from supporters and friends of the Nature Museum and Covid Relief federal funding available to nonprofits and small businesses, we created two new extended outdoor classrooms and play spaces, revitalized and upgraded Grasshopper Grove, purchased much needed computers for staff, and addressed a range of critical deferred maintenance projects.

Some projects are readily visible, like the dramatic transformation of the play space behind the Learning Center classroom pictured here, while others are unseen but just as important to our long term viability. Dave Work, chair of the Buildings and Grounds committee, says, “From routine maintenance to large scale projects the Nature Museum invested substantially in our facilities and properties in 2021. Old buildings mean there are challenges ahead, but we see this ongoing investment as critical to delivering on our mission.”



The Buildings and Grounds committee has several additional projects planned for the spring, including work at both the Outdoor Discovery and Wildlife Education Centers.



## NATURE EDUCATION & PLAY

During the last year, when time spent outdoors was the safest way to be together, we at HHNM were proud to bring nature education programs to the children of the region. Whether in the Young Naturalist preschool program, Summer Camp, Home School Naturalist, or at a weekend program or special event, our teachers and educators relied on discovery, exploration, and free play to create programs that gave children what they needed most during this strange and difficult time — a sense of normalcy. And the children reacted the way they always do, with the confidence of those who know they are exactly where they belong.

Liz Harrell, a member of HHNM’s Board of Trustees, loves the way HHNM’s programs celebrate the child in nature. She had this to say after joining a preschool class in Grasshopper Grove earlier this fall, “I had the chance to watch a group of three-year-olds interacting with the flowing water element. Their play was naturally embedded with observation of the water and experimentation with how the water flowed. It was a joy to see this interconnection between play and learning.”

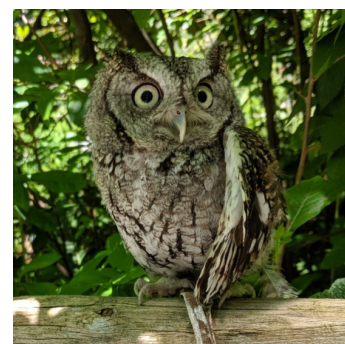
No matter what is happening in the world outside our fields, forests, and trails, HHNM will continue to offer nature education and play programs that connect with children to the natural world.

## ANIMAL AMBASSADORS

After being closed for most of 2020, the Wildlife Education Center reopened to the public in mid-July 2021. During the time our doors were closed, there were some big things happening inside. Taylor Ouellette, who has been part of the Nature Museum staff for more than three years, took over as manager of the facility. “I’ve been an animal lover my whole life, so I was excited to take on responsibility for the care of our animal ambassadors,” she says. “I’ll continue to meet the high standards set by my predecessor and look for ways to improve on the quality of care we offer even further.”

One of Taylor’s first changes was an update to our popular Meet the Animals program. Now, instead of a formal, sit-down program offered twice a day on weekends, a Nature Museum interpreter is available throughout the day to answer questions and facilitate face to face meetings between our guests and the animal ambassadors.

Finally, we were thrilled to receive a grant from the Dorr Foundation which will be used to renovate and revitalize the Hall of Animals beginning in the spring of 2022. This will be its first major update since the mid 1980s.



## THANK YOU!

Thank you for your generous support of nature education and play at the Nature Museum. Your donations make possible an array of hands-on, experiential education programs that help children and their families establish a meaningful connection to the natural world.

The shortened format of this year's Annual Report means we are unable to list our many members and supporters. Please visit our website to view the complete list.



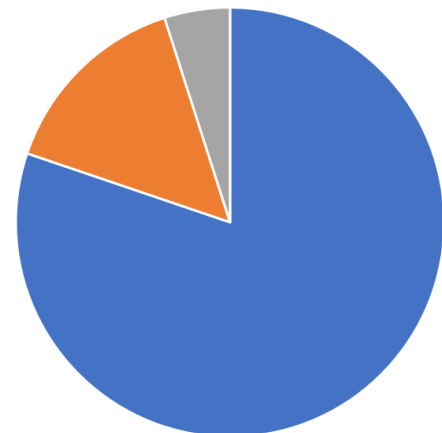
## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The information shown below reflects Fiscal Year 2021, which ran from March 1, 2020—February 28, 2021

### Operating Expenses

Education Program Costs	\$772,842
Administration	\$146,578
Fundraising	\$37,258
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$956,678</b>

### Operating Expenses

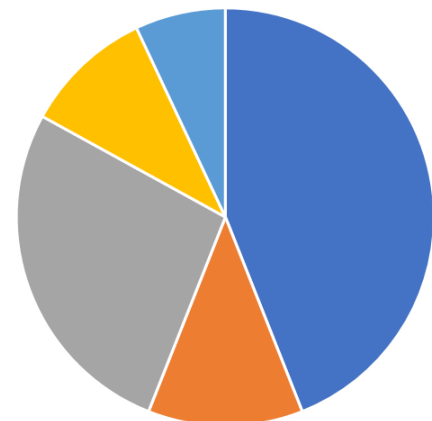


■ Education Program Costs ■ Administration ■ Fundraising

### Operating Revenue

Admissions/Sales/Program Fees	\$442,066
Fundraising Events	\$122,990
Grants & Corporate Sponsorships	\$267,666
Membership Donations	\$97,270
Other Donations	\$70,798
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,000,790</b>

### Operating Revenue



■ Admissions, Sales & Program Fees ■ Fundraising Events  
■ Grants & Corporate Sponsorship ■ Membership Donations  
■ Other Donations