



2018-19 Annual Report

Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences



Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

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as of August 2020

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Dear Friends,

This past year was full of incredible accomplishments for Tifft Nature Preserve and the Buffalo Museum of Science. I am pleased and gratified to thank you for helping to generate such tremendous success. With your support, each day we create high-impact programs and experiences for guests of all ages in fulfillment of our belief that *science creates opportunities and shapes our world*.

From hosting a series of outstanding exhibits at the Museum; to the completion of the vernal pools project and trail at Tifft; and the continuing increase in our programming impressions, collections care, and stewardship impact, together, we made great strides in forwarding our mission.

It is my pleasure to share the enclosed highlights from the past year. These include the state's investment of \$2.6 million to help restore our north façade and make the Museum's original stairs accessible, hosting the world-traveling exhibition *The Art of the Brick*, and welcoming thousands of online viewers at home and in classrooms to follow along as three osprey chicks came into the world, learned life skills, and eventually fledged from the nest. Once again in FY 19, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences has proven itself a premier cultural institution and a go-to destination for informal STEM learning and entertainment.

Thank you for being a part of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences family and for doing so much to help us produce these critical initiatives. Together, we are working to *raise the level of science literacy and engagement for all in our community*.

With great appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marisa Wigglesworth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marisa Wigglesworth
President and CEO

See It Through

In 2010, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences began its eight-year, \$8.1 million *See It Through* campaign, the most ambitious transformation of the Buffalo Museum of Science since opening in 1929. The *See It Through* campaign sought to complete the modernization of the Museum's existing exhibit spaces from the ground up, updating each gallery with a different science theme.

With the support of the WNY Community, the formerly diorama-based exhibits on the four floors of the Museum evolved over the next eight years into 10 highly interactive and immersive state-of-the-art science studios.

Within the 10 science studios, the Museum's six areas of Collections are displayed along with hands-on exhibits that provide context and allow visitors to physically engage with the science concepts presented. The goal of the *See It Through* campaign was to create a highly effective experiential learning environment suitable for learners of all ages.

From the early childhood gallery Explorations to the nine studios that explore the human body, paleontology, zoology, anthropology, astronomy, physics, entomology, nutrition, and earth science, each exhibit supports the NYS Core Curriculum and provides an informal science environment that excites and inspires.

The *See It Through* campaign officially concluded in September of 2018 as we celebrated the re-opening of the historic Kellogg Observatory. The *See It Through* campaign would not have been a success without the philanthropic support to further our mission of increasing the level of science literacy and STEM education for all in our community.

The following page outlines the renovations and new spaces made possible by the generosity of our supporters.

Buffalo in Space was one of the final science studios to be renovated as part of the campaign.



Explorations, 2010

Designed for early childhood development and science learning, Explorations features interactive stations with play themes focusing on a variety of science-based concepts and encourages adult-child interaction.

Explore YOU Presented by Independent Health, 2012

Explore YOU presented by Independent Health, offers a hands-on approach to health and invites guests to explore anatomy, biology, genetics, healthy lifestyles, and explores achievements in health science that have been made right here in the Buffalo Niagara region.

Our Marvelous Earth, 2012

Discover our Earth's systems and the alternative forms of energy our planet provides. This highly interactive space, that is generously presented by the Ackerman family, also features items from our Geology Collection, weather-measuring instruments used by generations past, and the Museum's famed Bentley Snowflake Collection.

Bug Works, 2013

Bug Works is about the kinds of bugs that creep, crawl, and fly, and their place and purpose in our ecosystem. Explore interactive stations and observe specimens from the Museum's Entomology Collection, including a selection of its famous Marchand insect models.

In Motion, 2013

Explore the basics of physics, mechanical motion, engineering, and organic motion through a highly-interactive studio space.

Artifacts, 2014

Artifacts features a selection of incredible pieces from the Museum's Anthropology Collections and explores the similarities across cultures as evidenced by the objects we create.

Rethink Extinct, 2015

Take a journey through time to explore the past – and the future – of life on Earth. Investigate events that made the headlines in Earth's history, learn why extinction is necessary for the ongoing diversity of life, and discover how human actions may be driving the next mass extinction.

Biodiversity, 2015

Biodiversity highlights the Museum's rich Natural History Collection to explore the inhabitants of the rainforest, African savanna, American prairie, the arctic, and the coastal waters of the northern Pacific.

Yum! Presented by Wegmans, 2016

Healthy living is achieved through a series of decisions. Through hands-on, interactive activities, guests of all ages will learn not only the "how to," but also the "how come?" of healthy living in a fun and engaging way.

Buffalo in Space, 2017

Buffalo in Space focuses on regional stories that connect us to the space and aerospace industries and illustrate current research. The exhibit highlights achievements in aerospace by local companies, while also recognizing that space represents the greatest – and wildest – of all possible frontiers.

Kellogg Observatory, 2018

The Buffalo Museum of Science is proud to open the skies once again to a new generation of explorers. The fully restored Lundin telescope is now powered by state-of-the-art mapping technology. The roof deck and dome pier are both fully accessible for all Museum guests.

Looking to the Skies

Having fallen into disrepair and in need of critical safety improvements, the Buffalo Museum of Science's Kellogg Observatory silently anchored Buffalo's East Side for over two decades. But in 2018, as the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences approached the end of its eight-year capital campaign to renovate the Museum's permanent exhibit spaces, all efforts turned toward the final philanthropic push that would restore the beloved rooftop icon.

Dubbed the *See It Through* campaign to help realize the completion of the multi-year plan, Museum supporters – from individuals to corporations and foundations and local government – came together to provide the generous funding needed to make the necessary repairs to the equipment and facility.

In a formal ribbon cutting ceremony held on the Museum's rooftop in summer 2018, the fully restored Lundin telescope was dedicated the "E.E. Both Memorial Telescope" in celebration and memory of beloved Museum educator Ernst Both. The Both telescope now rests safely under a durable, aluminized steel dome and is powered by state-of-the-art mapping technology. **Both the roof deck and dome pier were made fully accessible for all Museum guests thanks to the installation of a limited use/limited application (LULA) elevator generously donated by Bill and Jean Irr and their family.** The wheelchair lift insures that guests of all physical ability can access astronomy programming without limitation.

The renovated Kellogg Observatory marked the end of the *See It Through* campaign, and the beginning of the Museum's new identity as a contemporary, state-of-the-art facility engaging for audiences of all ages. **Seeking to invest in an updated brand identity that adequately reflected the revitalized Museum, the Kellogg Observatory re-opening also marked the launch of the Museum's new logo and *Find Why* brand.**

Commercials and billboards beckoned to Western New Yorkers to visit a Museum markedly different than their childhood memories, and sleek signs and banners throughout the building welcomed guests to a contemporary institution of learning and discovery.

FY 2019 marked the first full year of Kellogg Observatory viewings, reopening the skies to a whole new generation of explorers. Since then, many families have been able to enjoy our rooftop and experience breathtaking views of the solar system. The momentum from the restored Observatory allowed us to expand our astronomy programs and camp offerings and rent out our roof as a premier event venue.

Under its new brand, the Buffalo Museum of Science welcomed visitors at a rate that outpaced budgeted attendance. Many of our adult guests remarked on how much had changed since a childhood field trip. As the Museum continues to provide educational and entertaining experiences for all ages, we challenge our guests to *Find Why*.

FIND WHY.



“I can always say in 2018 we were able to open up the skies to a whole subset of individuals in our community who never had that opportunity before.”

Mark Poloncarz, Erie County Executive

Community Partnerships

The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences recognizes that our unique collections of specimens and artifacts truly belong to the community and, as part of our mission to elevate science literacy in our region, we prioritize making our Collections accessible to community partners and organizations.

When the opportunity was presented to us to partner with the Playwrights of WNY for a collaborative playwriting festival in 2019, we saw this as a chance to expand our reach to new audiences.

The idea was creatively simple: those wishing to enter the festival would write a 10-minute play that featured at least one Collections piece in whichever way the playwright determined. The Museum selected six objects from our anthropology, geology, zoology, botany, and entomology Collections and presented Playwrights of WNY with photos and a brief description of each.

While the Collections items presented to each playwright were the same, the inspiration each writer took from the Collections was unique and submissions ranged wildly in their tone. Some Collections pieces became characters, others became props for historic figures, and some drove the plot. We received plays across all genres including tragedy, historical, experimental, and farcical.

Twelve plays were submitted and scored by Museum staff, the top six of which were performed in the Museum's auditorium as a staged reading open to the public. **The event was a great way to highlight the breadth of our Collections and invite guests to consider the objects in a new context.** The top-ranked playwright was awarded a year membership to the Museum where they were able to come back and continue to glean inspiration from our Collections for future plays.



Headband, 19th century China



Eurypterid, *Eurpterus lacustris* Harlin, Buffalo, NY



Mastodon Mandible, Byron, NY



Philippine Eagle (or Monkey-eating Eagle), *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, 1969 Philippine Islands



Model of Deathcap, *Amanita phalloides*, 20th century Buffalo, NY



Sabertooth Longhorn Beetle, *Macrodonia cervicornis*, Peru



We are thrilled to report that funds generously awarded to the Buffalo Museum of Science through the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation's STEM 2035 Initiative enabled the 2019 launch of our Teen STEM Initiative (TSI).

The program is offered to teens on Buffalo's East Side and provides participants with STEM learning and job-readiness skills. By piquing STEM interest in teens, TSI allows youth ages 14 to 18 to explore diverse fields of study and provides them social and emotional experiences and mentorship that will serve them well while they're deciding whether to apply to college, complete a certificate at a trade school, or enter the workforce.

In its inaugural year, TSI welcomed nine participants, ranging in age from eighth grade to senior year, from a pool of 25 applicants. These participants met twice a week during the school year and four times a week during the summer to discover a wide array of STEM fields.

Topics, developed in partnership with the participants, ranged from sound engineering to cooking, CPR, American Sign Language, aerodynamics, construction, environmental stewardship, and more. Students of the program have expressed their appreciation of the experience and the exposure to varied avenues of study.



Mason Cruz, STEM Coordinator & Coach working with Teen STEM Initiative students.

Participant Jasmine Gales stated her appreciation for organizations like the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation, who care about investing in the future of WNY teens.

"I think it is cool that people think that this is important enough to fund programs for older teens and not view us as a lost cause," says Jasmine. "It is cool to see people interested in working with teenagers to change their lives."

Although the TSI program provides plenty of experiences, skills, and resume-building opportunities to help assure the long-term success of students, for some, participation could mean forgoing a part time job that could provide an immediate source of income. **To ensure that no TSI student needs to sacrifice financial support for educational opportunity, students in good standing with the program receive a monthly monetary stipend for their participation.** In order to alleviate concerns about transportation to and from the program, a City of Buffalo bus pass is also provided.

As we continue through the second year of the TSI, older students are applying to colleges and internships in the STEM field while younger participants continue to discover more about themselves and their passions in STEM. The program has expanded to welcome three additional students from Buffalo's East Side interested in exploring hands-on and real-world connections to science, technology, engineering, and math.

The Art of the Brick®

Presented By
M&T Bank

Nathan Sawaya

In the first weeks of February 2019, Western New York hosted a unique visitor. HUGMAN, a green, 16-inch-tall man built from LEGO® bricks was photographed at local landmarks and pop culture locations. Thankfully, this lone traveler was reunited with his friends on February 9 when the Buffalo Museum of Science welcomed a host of other LEGO® brick creations as it celebrated the opening weekend of *The Art of the Brick*.

Running through May of 2019, *The Art of the Brick*, presented by M&T Bank and created by Nathan Sawaya, provided the Western New York Community with a mesmerizing gallery of art constructed exclusively out of LEGO® bricks. The exhibit combined creativity, levity, and spatial intelligence to transform LEGO® bricks into re-imagined works inspired by DaVinci, Van Gogh, and Michelangelo, among 100 other works entirely comprised of LEGO® bricks.

The display provided a dynamic experience that demonstrated that science, engineering, and art can work in unison to create innovations and advance our future. A secondary part of the exhibition, *The Science of the Brick* presented by AAA Western and Central New York, provided guests a play space to participate in hands-on building, engineering, and design interactivities which served to engage the Museum's guests and enhance their experience while complimenting the Museum's STEM initiatives.

Throughout the 13-week run, the Museum buzzed with activity as guests visited the exhibition, interacted with our many science studios, and participated in a number of specially-themed programs. An adult-only Science After Hours program, a LEGO® brick themed Discovery Camp, and LEGO® themed Birthday Parties were highlights for guests.



The fun continued throughout the waning moments of the exhibition as the Museum remained open for the final thirty hours of the exhibit's run from Saturday, May 4th at 10 a.m. through Sunday, May 5th at 4 p.m.

The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences is extremely pleased with the success of *The Art of the Brick*. **When preparing for this exhibition, the attendance goal was set at 30,000. We reached that benchmark halfway through the run and more than doubled attendance projections by the end with over 60,000 visitors.**

The Art of the Brick was the first exhibition to be hosted in the Museum's recently renovated Temporary Exhibition Gallery. **Through an extraordinary gift by the late Richard Garman, the Museum was able to outfit the space in a manner befitting the presentation standards of the globally touring exhibition.** Repaired duct work, new HVAC, paint, drywall, flooring, and upgraded lighting and audio/video capabilities, transformed the space, and allowed us to bring the world-class exhibition to Western New York audiences.

Thank you to the family of Richard Garman, whose generous bequest made it possible for the Museum to provide the perfect venue to host the world-class *The Art of the Brick* exhibit. Additional thanks to our generous sponsors, our amazing guests, and all the volunteers who made this exhibit a success!



TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE

Strategic Plan



During the 2019 Fiscal Year, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences adopted a new Strategic Plan for Tifft Nature Preserve. **This Strategic Plan, which will guide the actions of Tifft Nature Preserve through September 2020, was developed after extensive conversations with internal staff and key collaborators and stakeholders.**

At the root of the discussion was an examination of the current state, assets, challenges, and the future hopes for Tifft Nature Preserve.

In addition to striking the balance between Tifft being enjoyed by visitors and maintaining the health of the ecosystem, highlights of the strategic discussions include challenges with fundamental public awareness of the preserve, lack of awareness of the connection between Tifft and the Buffalo Museum of Science, potential visitors not knowing how or why they might visit Tifft, and limited understanding of proper behavior when on a nature preserve.

The Society agreed that, as a major asset in the community, Tifft's story needs to be leveraged to both educate and drive traffic as well as inspire funding, use, and stewardship. Informed by these discussions, the 2018-2020 Tifft Strategic Plan includes four objectives meant to tackle the challenges faced by the Preserve and leverage the unique strengths and opportunities for the betterment of nature and the community. These goals will strengthen Tifft's presence in the community, increase the impact of environmental education efforts across Western New York, and ensure the Preserve remains a healthy habitat for the plants and animals that call it home and the individuals who come to experience nature next door.

#TiftOspreyWatch

For the last decade, one particular wildlife family has piqued the interest of Tift Nature Preserve visitors and staff: a pair of osprey that have migrated to the Preserve every year since 2011. For some background, osprey are large birds of prey that inhabit coastal regions and mate for life. Osprey have recently seen their numbers grow in Western New York as environmental protection laws have eradicated dangerous pesticides that plagued osprey populations for decades.

The popularity of our annual visitors soared in 2018, the Society began the #TiftOspreyWatch campaign. Featuring photos from local birders and photographers, these snapshots gave us insight into the lives of these magnificent birds of prey. In response to the growing demand for osprey updates, we were able to take #TiftOspreyWatch to another level in 2019. **Thanks to the generosity of the East Hill Foundation, Tift was able to install a high-definition wildlife monitoring camera to live stream footage of the osprey nesting platform on the Preserve.**

The camera, located on a towering utility pole overlooking Lake Kirsty, digitally broadcasts live video to the Tift website and social media channels for worldwide viewing. Preserve visitors were also able to view the live feed via a new digital screen inside the Herb & Jane Darling Environmental Education Center.



A view from our Osprey cam during hatching.

Viewers were able to tune in beginning April 30, 2019 and were greeted by the pair of osprey roosting over their eggs. Thanks to some detective work from our online audience, we were able to deduce that three eggs were in the nest. Viewers didn't have to wait long for the big moment! On May 24, 2019 at 1:04 p.m. the first hatchling broke through its shell. The video clip of the hatching reached 19,000 people online and had thousands of online views.

Over the summer, we watched the three osprey fledglings grow up right before our eyes. We watched their first flight, their first successful hunt and many sibling squabbles. We even got a literal birds eye view as the osprey parents defended their nest against not one, not two, but three Bald Eagles!

When it came time for the osprey family to migrate south for the winter, our team bid farewell and had an opportunity to reflect on the many successes of the camera. **Tens of thousands of people tuned in to the livestream on Tift's website and social channels.**

Classrooms around Western New York followed the osprey family, engaging with the Preserve throughout the summer. As we look forward to 2020, we are excited to welcome back the osprey pair with our fingers crossed for another successful mating season.





Taking Steps Forward

On March 19, 2019, as the Buffalo Museum of Science was celebrating its 90th year on Humboldt Parkway, CEO Marisa Wigglesworth was informed of an additional cause for celebration. **The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences was awarded \$2.6 million in grant funding from the state's recently announced East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund for crucial building improvements, specifically the restoration of the Buffalo Museum of Science's historic north entrance and limestone façade.**

This monumental grant came as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's \$65 million investment to improve the quality of life for Buffalo's East Side residents and is tied to the Governor's larger \$1.5 billion investment in Western New York. **The funding will supplement the \$1.16 million the Museum has secured from the City of Buffalo and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York to undergo a full restoration of the blighted façade and north entrance, which served as the original Museum entrance in 1929.** When completed, the project will provide a destination for passive recreation and pedestrian gathering for Museum guests and the East Side community.

The \$2.6 million grant, one of the largest in the Museum's storied history, will also allow for future accessible community programming on the Buffalo Museum of Science formal stairway.

"We hope people will come out and enjoy the park and relax on the stairs. The museum can do programming on the stairs, and we will absolutely invite the other community organizations to benefit from using the stairs, as well," said Marisa Wigglesworth.

The Museum is working with City of Buffalo officials to advance the restoration of the original grand staircase on the north side of the building.

This exciting project is expected to begin in 2021.

GIVING & SUPPORT

Because of you, amazing things happen at the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tifft Nature Preserve each day. We believe that science creates opportunities and shapes our world. Your generous support reflects how you value the importance of the science around us. Your gifts provide access to all in our community, especially those in under-resourced communities, to the wonders of science and the opportunities of STEM.

Thank you for your generous support!

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We are grateful to the following individuals who have generously provided unrestricted support in 2019.

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THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS



**TOTAL
VOLUNTEERS
IN 2019** **132**



**TOTAL HOURS
SERVED IN 2019**
10,832



**15 ORGANIZATIONS
VOLUNTEERED THEIR
TIME AT THE MUSEUM
& TIFFT**

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019

Operating support and revenue

Net assets without donor restrictions

Public sources	\$1,308,408	26%
Contributions	648,154	13%
Admissions	1,201,876	24%
Education and other fees	799,316	16%
Proceeds from endowment designated for operations	-	0%
Membership	512,69	10%
Museum shop sales, net of costs of \$41,202	45,953	1%
Special events	108,770	2%
Net assets released from restrictions for operations	364,910	8%
Total operating support and revenue	4,990,078	100%

Operating expenses

Curatorial	298,120	6%
Education	1,318,083	29%
Experience	1,119,591	24%
Management and general	1,060,131	23%
Marketing and fund development	821,306	23%
Total operating expenses	4,617,231	100%

Operating surplus (loss) before depreciation

Depreciation	948,288
Change in net assets without donor restrictions from operations	(575,441)

Other changes:

Net assets released from restrictions for capital purposes	10,325
Capital grants	261,341
Investment income (loss)	771,018
Total other changes	1,042,684
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	467,243

Net assets with donor restrictions:

Contributions	365,787
Investment return on donor-restricted endowment assets	17,268
Net assets released from restrictions	(375,235)
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	7,820
Change in net assets	475,063
Net assets- beginning	25,109,803
Net assets - ending	\$25,584,866

2018-2019 ATTENDANCE REPORT

**TOTAL
MUSEUM
VISITORS
193,934**



**TOTAL TIFFT
NATURE PRESERVE
VISITORS
33,260**



**TOTAL
SERVED,
OUTREACH
& OFFSITE
PROGRAMS
31,623**



**2019
TOTAL
COMBINED
ATTENDANCE
258,817**





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