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Raven Hill Discovery Center Strategic Plan 2017-2021 December 30, 2017

Mission: to provide a place that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art

Vision: providing opportunities for everyone to learn, create, grow, and play together, as they make connections that expand their awareness of the world as it was, is and might be.

Theory of Learning: The following statements give expression to the underlying principles that are the foundation of Raven Hill Discovery Center:

- **Learning is connected.** Encouraging explorations of the links between science, history and art promotes and builds relationships that strengthen understanding and build critical and creative thinking skills.
- **Learning is lifelong.** Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge. Raven Hill fosters attitudes for lifelong learning through hands-on programs and exhibits that encourage imagination, play and creativity.
- **Learning is participatory.** Making real world connections promotes an interest in active science, history and art and inspires our future workforce, promoting critical and creative thinking skills, collaboration and communication.
- **Learning is active.** Learning and playing helps the brain make important, long lasting connections. Play is the highest form of learning and creativity. We can play and create at any age. When learning is a part of play, lasting connections are made. Raven Hill's facilities, exhibits and programs encourage all visitors to play, learn and connect.
- **Learning is fun and messy.** It reshapes our thoughts and lives, many times in random acts of learning that are sometimes "messy". Raven Hill helps us learn, create, grow and play.
- **Learning builds community.** Raven Hill works with families, schools, libraries and the community as a whole to promote informal learning opportunities for everyone.

Strategic Direction Statement: Raven Hill Discovery Center seeks to create a sustainable, community-focused organization in northern Lower Michigan that continues to bring hands-on learning opportunities that connect science, history and art for all ages.

1. **Goal:** Continuity between the past, present and future that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art
 - a. **Strategy:** Ensure RHDC principles, passion and history are collected and shared
 - i. Create a living history of stewardship at RHDC
 - ii. Translate the founder's and volunteers' knowledge into accessible media for sharing and learning with public and for training of new staff
2. **Goal:** Unparalleled Programming that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art
 - a. **Strategy:** Offer best-in-region programming for all ages that informs, inspires and engages while fulfilling the current and changing needs of the community (i.e. STEM programs)
 - i. Focus on continuous improvement and evaluation of programs and services so RHDC represents the most value/respected perspectives
 - ii. Ensure that programs are maintained with up to date information and resources
 - b. **Strategy:** Collaborate with local, regional, state and national organizations.
 - c. **Strategy:** Create northern Michigan's first participatory museum experience--an ongoing process of engaging visitors and encouraging visitor participation with Raven Hill's artifacts and exhibits, starting with small, easy implementations and expanding to a broader strategic way of thinking about changing traditional museums.
 - i. Will serve as a benchmark for others in the region
 - ii. Clearly communicate and educate board members, staff, volunteers, visitors and the public about what a "Participatory Museum" means
3. **Goal:** A Raven Hill Campus that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art
 - a. **Strategy:** Ensure current exhibits, facilities and grounds are well maintained, so that everything enhances the learning experience
 - i. Prioritize indoor and outdoor exhibit completions, maintenance and enhancements
 - ii. Optimize the usage of the facility exhibits:
 1. Clear signage that allows visitors to find, identify and use the Center's facilities and exhibits.
 2. Adequate external marketing
 - iii. Create and maintain inventory of assets
 - iv. Encourage energy sustainability of buildings
 - v. Preserve and maintain Raven Hill ecology to provide outdoor educational opportunities and overall ecological health
 - b. **Strategy:** Create a shared visual master plan (picture) for a 20-year vision of campus facilities and exhibits
 - i. Purchase adjacent property (approximately 10 acres) for RHDC visibility and access, as well as increased experiential learning opportunities at Deer Creek
 - ii. Determine what new buildings & exhibits to prioritize on existing campus.
4. **Goal:** Community Relations and Marketing that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art

- a. **Strategy:** Increase public awareness of the wonder, experimentation and learning that RHDC offers for all ages
 - i. Create a yearly media plan incorporating strategic and tactical goals
 - 1. External Marketing, member outreach and advertising
 - b. **Strategy:** Enhance Outreach and Fundraising
 - i. Identify Donor, Members, Partners, Friends of the Organization, Partnerships and Opportunities for collaboration to maximize impact and resources (including financial)
 - ii. Clear objectives tied to goals/needs at RHDC
5. **Goal:** Financial Stewardship that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art
- a. **Strategy:** Improve transparent and concise tracking of financials in an intuitive and organized fashion to allow for confident decision making about funding
 - i. Aspire to position RHDC on a financially sound foundation
 - 1. Debt free
 - 2. 6 months operating income in the bank at all times
 - b. **Strategy:** Develop strong and consistent plans to solicit funding from all possible sources: Foundations, Private sector, Public sector, Individuals
 - c. **Strategy:** Endeavor to maximize the positive financial impact of existing programs, exhibits and services
6. **Goal:** Board Governance and Administration that enhances lifelong learning for people of all ages by connecting science, history and art
- a. **Strategy:** Ensure the successful transition/succession from a founder led organization to a capable board and staff led organization that shares and grows RHDC's mission and vision.
 - b. **Strategy:** Maintain an agile and diverse governance model that infuses RHDC with new ideas/thoughts/perspectives that enhance the mission, vision and values of the Center
 - i. Recruit and retain diverse group of staff, board members and volunteers
 - ii. Ensure board support of staff is unwavering and vice versa, including mutual respect and open communication between board and staff
 - iii. Provide professional development and training for staff as needed
 - iv. Develop and codify strong Policies and Procedures for RHDC staff, board members and volunteers
 - v. Continually monitor and evaluate RHDC's administrative and program needs as compared to community needs and staffing levels.

2018 STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKS

Goal	Task
Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to “download” founder’s memories/experiences • Create process to collect staff, volunteer and visitor memories and experiences (participatory museum)
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhaul programs in science, history and the arts to reflect current offerings for adults and children, as well as professional development for educators • Create a program booklet and flyers with dynamic explanations of each program and its goals & audience • Define & begin to design participatory museum experiences
Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement a plan that optimizes the use of all facilities—museum, fiber studio, energy house, schoolhouse, maker spaces (aka print shop), treehouse • Create and implement a plan that enhances the visitor experience at all major exhibits, both indoor (animals, periodic table, etc.) & outdoor (music garden, Jurassic park, Smallville, medicinal gardens, taxi trail and ancient world.) • Produce a map of the current campus & property in anticipation of creating 20 year vision of facilities & exhibits
Community relations & marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a marketing calendar & budget incorporating print ads, email & social media for all Raven Hill events and programs
Financial stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work toward having a 3 month operating income in bank • Fundraising training & plan implemented with Freshwater Future
Board governance & administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage board involvement in meeting 2017-21 strategic planning tasks

ALREADY “in the works”—

Roof on Schoolhouse – spring 2018

ADA Common Denominator signs up -- spring 2018