



2011 – 2016
Strategic Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

Building life-long connections for children and adults that link science, history and art in a hands-on learning environment.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to provide a unique environment for quality hands-on learning for people of all ages. At Raven Hill Discovery Center we help visitors discover the world of science, history and art. Connections emerge through constantly evolving exhibits and facilities, thereby helping participants make sense of the world as it was, is, and might be.

A rural setting with pond, swamp, forest and fields, sitting on 300 acres including the Nature Conservancy's Raven Hill, with a large assortment of indoor and outdoor exhibits, Raven Hill Discovery Center provides an environment for discovery and the space to learn, create, grow and play. We celebrate the joy of life-long learning and the appreciation of nature and our earth.

VALUE STATEMENTS

The following statements give expression to the values that are the foundation of Raven Hill Discovery Center:

Respect: We respect all people—children, families and the communities they represent.

Learning: We foster attitudes for life-long learning utilizing hands-on learning to evoke imagination, play and creativity.

Stewardship: We value gifts of time, talent, financial and environmental resources, and use them in a trustworthy and responsible manner.

Integrity: We value honesty in our relationships and seek to listen with openness to one another and the communities we serve.

Service: We value Raven Hill Discovery Center as a learning resource for serving children, families and communities.

Partnership: We value partnership and collaborating in fulfilling the mission of Raven Hill Discovery Center.

Earth and Natural Resources: We promote stewardship and appreciation of the earth and its resources in all programs and services.

STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder is an individual or group who is in relationship with Raven Hill Discovery Center and can affect its future. The stakeholders of Raven Hill Discovery Center include:

- Children
- Families
- Communities
- Board Members
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Funders
- Private Financial Contributors
- Public and private school systems
- School faculties
- Colleges and universities
- Business and industry
- Community organizations
- Service organizations

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The following are the prioritized strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by the board in developing strategies in support of this strategic direction:

Strengths perceived:

- Unique facility
- Sustained, quality programming for 20 years
- Hands-on approach to learning for all ages
- Indoor & Outdoor activities and exhibits
- Diversity of funding sources
- Appeal to those interesting in life-long learning
- Outreach opportunities to schools and community
- Cheri's commitment and knowledge
- Property used as multi-purpose facility
- Unique community partnerships
- Movement from "craft" to "art"
- Expanded beyond the youth market
- Financial resources well allocated
- Point-of-destination location
- Annual report
- Diversity of educational topics available
- A "family" place

Weaknesses perceived:

- Location
- More volunteer involvement
- No succession plan
- Limited staffing – rely too much on Cheri & Tim
- Marketing
- Reaching out to service organizations
- Outreach to youth service organizations (boy/girl scouts, etc.)
- Tim's reduced involvement
- Storage
- Water Well

Opportunities perceived:

- Expanded hours
- Grants
- Increase community exposure
- Attendance increase from more Michigan residents
- Great community relationship
- CMU continuing education relationship
- WCMU public radio
- Internships
- Breezeway, find us at Mile 15

Threats perceived:

- Every present threat of decrease in state grand funding
- Weather & “the hill”
- Decrease in school funding resources
- General economy
- Competition from other “entertainment” competitors
- Lack of utilization by some schools in the system
- State required testing takes too much time/resources

ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS

The following are the key issues which have the greatest strategic importance for Raven Hill Discovery Center during the next five years:

Organizational Capacity: Develop staffing in the area of administrative, facilities and educational support.

Fund Development/Fiscal Management: Continue to pursue diverse funding sources for the organization; grow, stabilize and maintain the operating budget; continue to manage financial controls.

Community Relations: Maintain the relationship base which has been developed with various communities and systems; grow the public awareness of the organization with a new emphasis on social media; expand the relationship with collaborators; grow and maintain the relationship with donors who give time, talent and financial resources.

Programs/Services Development: Continual development and evaluation of year round programs; development of programs in response to specified stakeholder needs.

Board Governance: Maintain the Board's role and responsibilities in terms of governance process, fulfilling the vision and mission, and determine staffing responsibilities; cultivate Board membership for age diversity, community relationships and commitment for vision.

Facility/Land Site: Enhance present buildings and outdoor exhibits.

Strategic Direction for 2011-2016

Directional goal statements for each organizational focus:

Organizational Capacity

1. Assess Raven Hill Discovery Center's administrative, facilities and educational staffing needs to assure accomplishing mission.

Facilities/Management

2. Create priority listing of enhancements to current facilities and outdoor exhibits

Financial Steward/Fiscal Management

3. Continue to identify, develop and diversify private and public funding support to accomplish Raven Hill Discovery Center's mission.
4. Administer Raven Hill Discovery Center financial resources to effectively meet mission objectives.

Programs/Services

5. Ensure the programs/services of Raven Hill Discovery Center facilitate hands-on learning linking science, history and art.

Community Relations

6. Continue to develop public awareness of the programs, mission, vision and values of Raven Hill Discovery Center.

Board Governance

7. Maintain a governance model that stewards the vision and mission of Raven Hill Discovery Center.

Strategic Direction and Strategies for 2011-2016_____

Organizational Capacity:

1. Assess Raven Hill Discovery Center's administrative, facilities and educational staffing needs to assure accomplishing mission.

Strategies

- 1.1 Create position(s) to address the need for administrative, facilities and education outreach support.
- 1.2 Determine funding options from current budget and operational requests from external sources

Facilities/Management:

2. Create priority listing of enhancements/maintenance to current facilities and outdoor exhibits

Strategies

- 2.1 Outline priority needs for current facilities/exhibits
- 2.2 Outline additional physical space needs

Financial Steward/Fiscal Management:

3. Continue to identify, develop and diversify private and public funding support to accomplish Raven Hill Discovery Center's mission.

Strategies

- 3.1 Increase funding from foundations, supporting organizations and government. (can we get current breakdown of where funding comes from, a % breakdown)
- 3.2 Develop great funding support from the private section.

4. Administer Raven Hill Discovery Center financial resources to effectively meet mission objectives.

Strategies

- 4.1 Continue to evaluate current revenue/expenses of operation budget.

Programs/Services:

5. Ensure the programs/services of Raven Hill Discovery Center facilitate hands-on learning linking science, history and art.

Strategies

- 5.1 Evaluate all programs/services on a regular basis.
- 5.2 Continue and develop existing program/services to meet identified needs in youth and adult programming.
- 5.3 Pursue opportunity for developing college internship programs for Raven Hill Discovery Center
- 5.4 Maximize opportunities for educators to experience Raven Hill Discovery Center as an educational resource for professional development.

Community Relations:

6. Continue to develop public awareness of the programs, mission, vision and values of Raven Hill Discovery Center.

Strategies

- 6.1 Maintain a Board liaison for public relations/marketing
- 6.2 Monitor marketing plan to maintain community awareness of Raven Hill Discovery Center mission.
- 6.3 Develop, maintain and enhance partnerships with community organizations/systems that support Raven Hill Discovery Center's vision and mission.

Board Governance:

7. Maintain a governance model that stewards the vision and mission of Raven Hill Discovery Center.

Strategies

- 7.1 Continually review Board authority and responsibility
- 7.2 Work to expand the Board's age diversity