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*Raven Hill Discovery Center is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.*

**Mission:** Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

To: Friends and Family everywhere  
From: Cheri and Raven Hill  
Date: December 19, 2020  
Re: Happy Holidays

Hello to Everyone!

Before written history, there was oral tradition. Humans shared stories with younger generations as a way of preserving memories important for survival. These oral descriptions helped retain valuable knowledge over many generations.

In the late 1800's, Emile Durkheim, French sociologist, used the term **social memory**. He talked about how each new generation is connected to past generations. Maurice Halbwachs was also a sociologist. He coined the term **collective memory**, meaning that our personal memories are remembered through the filter of our collective and social memories.

Now, we understand that memories overlap, making them both individual and collective. In this day and age, if we need to know something, we don't have to remember everything. The world is at our "beck and call". We use our cell phones or computers to Google, whatever it is that we need to know. However, the stories of our growing-up years are important too, as accurate or inaccurate as they may be. This pandemic might be a perfect time to slow down and share some of those tales with your kids and grandkids—and them with you. Think about writing your memories down, so family stories are not lost! In fact, COVID inspired us to start the new tradition of weekly updates. They have allowed us to record and share some of the Center's history, as we preserve it for the future!

Since 1991, Raven Hill has provided a place for its visitors to experience both individual and collective memories. From the Animal Room and Magnet Table inside to Jurassic Park outside, visitors create their own special memories here.



Teamwork makes it easy to construct a free-standing tower and builds collective memories at the same time.



With special permission from staff, Laken climbed the fence to compare his foot to the life-size T-Rex foot in Jurassic Park, creating his own unique and individual memory.



(Above) Anna and Boaregard, the red tail boa constrictor, are pictured here in 1992 and then 21 years later in 2013 (Right), when Anna returned to hang out in the Animal Room and relive one of her favorite Raven Hill memories.



The other morning, my sister and I were reminiscing about holiday foods. A memory surfaced of a restaurant where our family often enjoyed a meal out. There were always lots of cars there, loaded with other families, just like ours. We could almost smell and taste the food again. However, we could not remember the restaurant's name. We knew that it was in Indiana, just over the state line from Coldwater Lake, where our cottage was. We agreed it was located on a lake. But neither of us could immediately come up with the name of the restaurant nor the lake. It took all of a couple minutes for my sister to go "online" and find Clay's Family Restaurant—still serving home cooking at its finest—right on US 27 by Lake George. It took the two of us, or the "three of us", if you include Google, to reconstruct the past—a new kind of **collective memory**. I find that I am experiencing more of these little holes in my memories, as well as these voids happening more often than in the past. I either wait and it finally comes back to me or I depend on the recollections of my siblings and friends to help me fill in the gaps!

These winter holidays are normally full of wonderful collective and social memories for most of us. This time of year, we especially remember extended family, traditional foods and beautiful decorations that make the season special to us. Families look forward to sharing their collective memories through customs passed down from generation to generation.



At Raven Hill, participants create fused glass art that can spark wonderful memories for years to come.

Kevin Arnold from The Wonder Years put it this way: memories are a way of holding on to the things you love, the things you are and the things you never want to lose. While it is tempting to gather together for the holidays, this may be the year to hold onto those rituals that we can do "solo" and maybe create some new traditions, as we stay home and stay safe during COVID. Utilize the amazing technology available to us like Zoom, FaceTime and email to connect and share with others. May your own individual and collective memories be an anchor in this pandemic, keeping you company and providing positive thoughts for the coming year.

Thank you all, individually and collectively, for your continued devotion to the Center and for helping us form amazing memories for our visitors. The Center would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, for their grant award of \$3,750 to help with operational expenses during this pandemic. With everyone's help and support, Raven Hill can continue to provide an extraordinary place that creates and enhances special memories for all ages.

Our thanks to you for allowing us to reminisce with you this week. If you are interested in previous updates, they are all available on our website—[www.MiRavenHill.org](http://www.MiRavenHill.org)

You know that I always enjoy hearing from you, so text or call my cell—231.675.6025 or email [cheri@miravenhill.org](mailto:cheri@miravenhill.org) anytime. Wishing you all the best during this holiday season. May the new year bring you good health, better memories and a light at the end of the tunnel.

Hugs from a distance,

*Cheri*

(right) This little felted guy is going to keep me company this year & help me create new memories.



Christmas pictures are a collective memory for many families, including the Culver clan, pictured here in 1964. Can you guess which person would become the future co-founder of Raven Hill?

