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*Raven Hill Discovery Center, incorporated in 1991, 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: April 24, 2021  
Re: Weekly Update

Greetings Everyone!

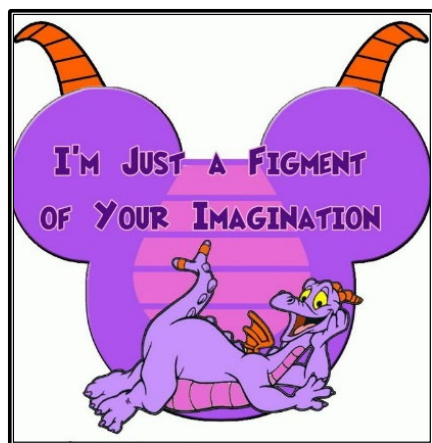
Some things never seem to change. Visitors love the Animal Room as much as ever. The kids ask, "Is it real?", when they see the hammerhead shark. My answer is always the same, "Yes, it is real. Otherwise, it would be a 'figment of your imagination'." What they really want to know is: is it alive or was it alive? And I answer "It is real, but it is not alive and the only part that is from the real or "live" shark is the teeth. The body is fiberglass, because the skin would be too smelly! The eyes are made of glass.



There are great stories about our "real" shark: how it came to be at Raven Hill, how it was originally caught and how it has attacked three people right here in our Animal Room. You'll have to ask Cheri about those stories next time you visit. AND you'll have to use your imagination!

My thoughts this week are about the many figments of the imagination that have shaped Raven Hill Discovery Center over the past 30 years. Even now, Raven Hill continues to evolve and be the experience it is, because "the imagination has the extraordinary capacity to shape reality."—Abrams & Davoli.

With both financial and volunteer support from many people within the community, the Center is an extensive collection of imagined exhibits, facilities and programs that have become reality.

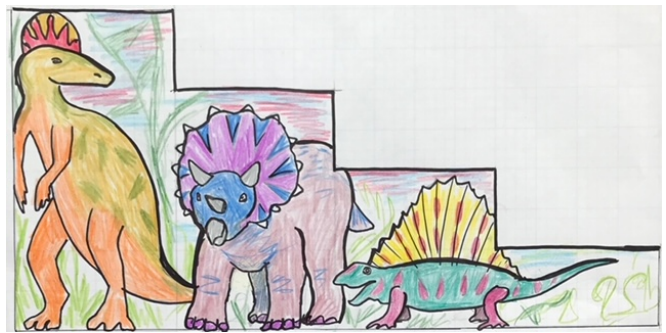
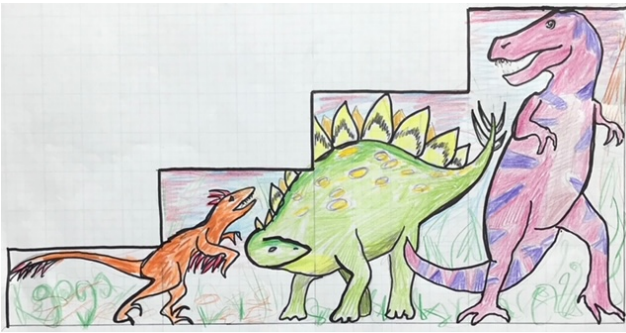


I love Disney's Figment character, because imagination has made Raven Hill what it is today. In 1962, Walt Disney combined two words—IMAGInation and engINeERING—into a new word, "IMAGINEERING". "Disneyland will never be completed, as long as there's imagination left in the world" Disney said. The same holds true for Raven Hill.

A recent figment of our imagination is becoming a reality this spring. The pathway is mowed, the mulch gets delivered next week and the learning stations for the **Connections Trail** are in progress. Thank you to past and recent funders:

- ❖ Baiardi Foundation
- ❖ Charlevoix County Community Foundation
- ❖ Alden & Vada Dow Family Foundations
- ❖ Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation
- ❖ Great Lakes Energy People Fund
- ❖ Individual donations

The new trail is being transformed from imagination to reality. While the pathway is being completed, artists and volunteers are using their collective imaginations to create wonderful open-air learning opportunities for Raven Hill's visitors. The **Connections Trail** will connect science, history & the arts, as it enhances formal education and engages visitor learning with hands-on outdoor experiences.



Artist Kelly Boyle is working her imagination overtime on a two-sided **Dino Height Station**. Visitors can measure their height using a modern ruler or ancient cubit. The dinos are “pre-teen” dinosaurs and will be about half the size of their actual adult counterparts. I can’t wait to see this learning station! How about you? I’m sure these dinosaurs will capture your imagination!

Gloria Steinem said, “Without leaps of imagination, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.” Raven Hill continues to imagine and plan, but we can use your help. If you enjoy using your imagination or even if you would just like to lend a hand, we would love to hear from you. Imagine constructing hopscotch courts or balance beams for the **Connections Trail**. If you love birds, help us design a bird station. If you spend time in the woods, we need “tree cookies” that show the annual rings of different kinds of trees. We would like help with a Raven Hill “watershed” station. We have a ship’s wheel and pulley, but could use assistance in creating a station with simple machines, like levers & inclined planes. We are imagining a solar energy station and a windmill. There are old slate boards that need to be framed and mounted, so families can play tic-tac-toe or draw pictures. There’s so much to imagine, plan and create to make the **Connections Trail** a reality. Give a call (231.536.3369) and join in on the fun.



The abacus or counting frame is a tool used for calculating numbers. It dates back 2500 years and is still used today. A giant abacus will make a great interactive exhibit for all ages. Call Cheri, if you are interested in creating an oversized abacus for a learning station.



Bring your own personal “animal handler” with you to facilitate getting up close and personal with a real live snake & a lizard. Raven Hill staff will be the “guide on the side” for any adult visitor willing to help out and let their group hold or pet Checkers or Spike. Before you come, use your imagination to draw and color pictures of what you think Checkers and Spike might look like. Then observe and compare!

Raven Hill re-opened last weekend, with strict COVID policies in place. Official hours right now are noon to 4pm on Saturdays, 2pm to 4pm on Sundays or other times by appointment. Visitors are asked to make reservations. You can call 231.536.3369 or email [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org). If there is already a scheduled group indoors and you didn’t book in advance—no worries! Your group will be given a return time for the Museum and Animals, just like at Disney World! There’s plenty to keep a family busy outdoors, while they wait to explore inside. Of course, everything depends on the pandemic and state pandemic guidelines, so check our website before you come: [www.miravenhill.org](http://www.miravenhill.org)

Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions." So, imagine a future without COVID. Continue to do your part: get vaccinated, wash your hands thoroughly, wear your mask correctly, socially distance & stay away from large gatherings. We want to see you here soon, enjoying our old and new exhibits, both indoors and outside.

Hugs, *Cheri*