



Raven Hill

DISCOVERY CENTER

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

2024/25 Impact Highlights

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Raven Hill Discovery Center's programs and exhibits bridge past knowledge with future discovery, bringing together families, educators, students, and volunteers in the shared joy of learning. They connect science, history, and art; blend formal and informal education; and foster meaningful connections across generations of curious minds.

Thirty-four years ago, Raven Hill Discovery Center was founded on a simple but powerful belief:

learning should be hands-on, minds-on, and deeply connected. In our first decade, we opened our doors to inquisitive minds of all ages. Our growing collection of learning spaces invited movement, sparked exploration, and turned every walk into an adventure. Every step forward was a chance to learn something new.

Our second decade was marked by exciting growth and development both indoors and outside.

Facility and exhibit expansions allowed thousands of school children from more than twelve counties to explore science, history, and the arts at Raven Hill during this time – making connections that extended far beyond the classroom.

Both challenges and milestones occurred during our third decade.

We navigated the uncertainties of the COVID pandemic, while continuing to grow in meaningful ways. During this time, Raven Hill celebrated major partnerships with organizations like NASA and the Smithsonian Institution, allowing us to step confidently into a broader role as a trusted educational resource.

In this fourth decade, we're dreaming big.

Rooted in a rich history, we're laying the foundation for a more sustainable and far-reaching future—expanding access, strengthening infrastructure, and launching new programs and exhibits. To this end, we welcome our new Executive Director, Haley Breniser, who will help guide Raven Hill as it evolves from a founder-led dream into a founder-inspired Center—firmly rooted in this community and built to thrive for generations to come.



2024/25 NUMBERS

Visitor
interactions*
8,060

Volunteer
hours
966

Schools
served
67

*Road closed for bridge construction August - December 2024

COMMUNITY/PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Career Expo

The 31st career expo sponsored by MiSTEM Region 13 welcomed 7th and 8th graders to participate in hands-on career explorations at Raven Hill Discovery Center! Science and technology professionals gave presentations and offered students the opportunity to explore careers where they may have interest and learn about other careers they may not have previously considered.

May 20th and 21st, 8 schools and 167 students

HOT

HOT stands for Here Or There. The HOT Project funded by grants from Charlevoix County Community Foundation and Petoskey Harbor Springs Areas Community Foundation, gave PreK - 12 Charlevoix and Emmet County students and their teachers the opportunity to experience unique hands-on learning using a field trip or outreach model that flexed to meet the needs of schools, teachers and their students.

January - April, 2025, 16 schools and 886 participants

Free Second Saturdays

FREE (Families Reaching for Educational Excellence) Second Saturdays, underwritten in memory of Diane Strzelinski, provide the opportunity for families to strengthen creative and critical thinking skills and problem-solve as they spend time together exploring Raven Hill Discovery Center at no cost on the second Saturday of each month.

Number of visitors 2024/25 - approximately 500

YIRA Project

Supported by Raven Hill, the Noche Latina display by East Jordan Middle/High School Spanish classes was featured as one of 25 groups that participated in the New York City exhibition titled Making Home – Smithsonian Design Triennial.

November 1, 2024, 15 students and family members represented in NYC

"Raven Hill is a precious Northern Michigan jewel to be sustained so future generations can benefit." – Tom Hanna

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The board and staff of Raven Hill Discovery Center are working together to establish a vision for the future that will guide the work of Raven Hill and focus on:

- *Inspiring wonder, igniting curiosity and opening minds to discovery through hands-on learning opportunities and diverse experiences that offer meaningful connections*
- *Strengthening organizational and operational excellence to ensure Raven Hill is here for generations to come*
- *Maximizing and expanding exhibits, facilities and programming that fosters community enrichment through learning and discovery for all ages*

2024/25 BOARD OF DIRECTORS (L to R)

Matt McLeod, Cooper Galvin, Sarah Roche, Darrell Jacob, Bryon Ries, Founder and Program Director Cheri Leach, Holly Sasso, new Executive Director Haley Breniser and Brandon Hill. Not pictured – Debbie Bishop.