

WHERE SCIENCE HISTORY AND ART CONNECT

To: Raven Hill friends

From: Cheri

Date: June 14, 2025

Re: *Hodgepodge*

The word “hodgepodge” means a jumble or mixture of different things. The origin is Middle English and Old French. In the 14th century, hodgepodge or hotchpotch described hearty mix of meat and vegetables in a stew. Now, it refers to any diverse mixture, such as a collection of objects, ideas, or styles. We use hodgepodge to describe an eclectic or diverse collection, like art styles, furniture, books on a shelf, or even a group of people. This week at Raven Hill has been just such a hodgepodge of progress, celebration, and opportunity, just the way we like it to be.

Thanks to a very generous donor, we’re rolling forward—literally—with new wheels for accessibility. Visitors needing extra mobility support can now request golf-cart rides to help them explore all corners of the Center, from the Energy House to the Schoolhouse and beyond. That boost comes just in time, as the road leading up to Raven Hill has been freshly paved, making it smoother than ever for school buses, families, and curious explorers of all ages. Of course, the hill remains “as is”!

Superhighway



The paving is done. Next come guard rails.

New wheels



We are ready to roll for visitors who need a little assistance exploring the outdoor campus.

Outreach



Bellaire librarian Tom Shilts puts it this way, “119 students, 22 Adults, 1 Box Turtle, 1 Bearded Dragon, and 1 Corn Snake makes for a GREAT start to our Summer Reading Program!”

Leather pouches



Sewing a pouch requires great concentration.

Making butter



Making butter takes lots of shaking!

Thanks to great volunteers, including Jean, Gayle, Dave and Daniel, Raven Hill is making steady progress around the main campus. Recently, they helped with cleaning, pruning trees and completing miniature door & window timelines in the ET Building. These awesome workers have also lent a hand with painting, adding a handrail at the Schoolhouse steps and replacing areas of rotted decking. In addition, a new safety railing is being installed at the Alternative Energy House. Once we place a few chairs there, the upgraded east deck will be safer and more inviting for visitors who want to relax for a bit or enjoy a snack.

Speaking of volunteers, this week we got a call about a family of six adults who might possibly like to have a volunteer outing at Raven Hill in August. I immediately sent a list of possible projects for them to consider! For any families or groups who want to get involved and teach children & others about the value of volunteerism, we invite you to consider a group volunteer project here at Raven Hill this summer—help us plant, paint, maintain trails, or lend a hand with exhibits. It's a great way to make memories and, at the same time, make a difference.

Raven Hill is currently open daily to the public. No appointments are needed from 10am to 4pm weekdays, noon to 4pm on Saturdays and 2pm to 4pm on Sundays. Visitors to the area are already taking advantage of the expanded hours. Janet Dietsch shared this, "We visited Raven Hill yesterday. All three generations of us had a great time. It is unusual to find a place to go that can engage all ages like Raven Hill. The diversity and well thought out interactive displays were fun for each of us. We were impressed by all the artifacts we were able to see and "play" with. The staff was very knowledgeable. I appreciated how they engaged our grandson, showing him things he would find interesting. Thank you so very much! What a treasure!"

Now is also the time to sign up for summer classes and workshops. Whether you're interested in creative arts, history, STEM exploration or special adult workshops, there's something for everyone. The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum awarded a grant for innovation, so there is no charge for the Learn and Create middle and high school summer classes. The Grow & Play classes for the younger set are flexible to fit your schedule. Sign up for a single class, a week or more! Register at www.miravenhill.org/learn

Don't forget that every second Saturday of each month is free admission for families, thanks to a donation by Ed Strzelinski in memory of his wife, Diane. If you missed this weekend's free event, there is always July, August and beyond! On a **FREE 2nd Saturday**, families can explore, discover and connect at no cost. Please note that this is a family day, so we ask groups to plan their visit another time.

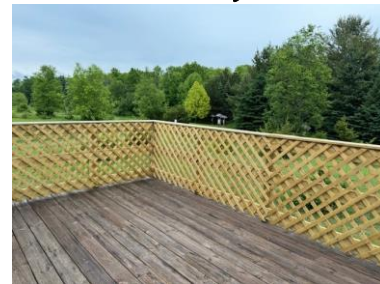
Finally, Raven Hill is one of eight finalists for a \$10,000 GLE grant. We want to thank everyone who has already voted for us and remind all Great Lakes Energy (GLE) members who have yet to vote: this member-

voted award could help us expand programming and accessibility even further. **Voting closes June 20**, and every vote counts—each household gets just one, so if you're a GLE member, we hope you'll take a moment to support Raven Hill with your important and time-sensitive vote.

It's been a true hodgepodge at Raven Hill this week—accessibility upgrades, fresh pavement at the creek, the final flurry of field trips, library outreach, volunteer opportunities, and family fun. Each piece may seem small on its own, but together they create the exciting patchwork of happenings that keeps Raven Hill alive and ever changing. Here, discovery doesn't follow a straight line—it meanders, stirs, and surprises, just like a good hodgepodge should!

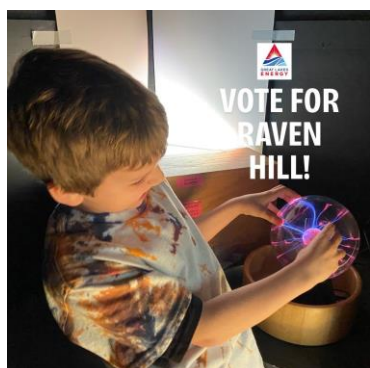
Cheri

Safety upgrade



Volunteer Daniel Wolcott spent many hours making this deck safe for everyone.

Your vote counts



Support our future innovators! Vote at <http://www.gtlakes.com/community-grant-giveaway/>