

ANNUAL 2015
REPORT 2016
FISCAL YEAR



MAKING CONNECTIONS



SCIENCE
CENTER
OF IOWA
& BLANK IMAX
DOME THEATER

The Science Center of Iowa engages and inspires Iowans along their journey of lifelong science learning.



*Cover photo is a close-up of fused plastic, a Making STEM Connections activity. See the back cover to try it at home!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

The Science Center of Iowa prides itself on MAKING CONNECTIONS, which is at the forefront of our mission to engage and inspire Iowans along their journey of lifelong science learning.

Through connections with communities across the state, our informal learning experiences and professional development opportunities empower adults, children and educators to enhance their Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills that allow us to educate and engage diverse populations.

Making connections with our visitors and preschool students through on-site programming and hands-on experiences facilitates experimental and creative thinking, which inspires new ideas and innovation.

Our staff connect with local and national experts to enhance their knowledge and skills, which inspires us to create, develop and implement robust educational programs and new exhibits.

Making connections is the catalyst for success. Thank you for supporting our efforts to engage and inspire Iowans along their journey of lifelong science learning and make connections.

Curt Simmons
President & CEO

SCI
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MILESTONES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



1. Collectors' Corner – The Collectors' Corner mini-exhibit in our *What On Earth?* experience platform opened in April, inviting visitors to collect and share things they've found in the natural world. **2. Star Theater** – We renovated our Star Theater planetarium with a state-of-the-art system, featuring 4K projectors that provide vibrant colors, sharp contrast and brilliant images. **3. Bike rack** – Thanks to generous community support, we welcomed "Spikey the Cyclosaurus" to SCI in July. This eye-catching bike rack connects us to the growing Des Moines cycling community. **4. The Force Awakens** – *The Force Awakens* was a blockbuster success for the Blank IMAX Dome Theater with a total of 60 sold-out shows and more than 18,800 tickets sold. **5. Geometry Playground** – *Geometry Playground* engaged visitors in playful math exploration through fun, fast-paced exhibit components like the Gyroid, shape-inspired tunnels and geometric sculptures. **6. RACE: Are We So Different?** – This highly personal and thought-provoking traveling exhibition investigated the science of race and human variation and provided new connections to the community. **7. Earth Day** – Visitors walked or biked between three cultural attractions during the 2016 Downtown Earth Day Tour, a partnership between SCI, the World Food Prize and the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. Retired astronaut Clayton Anderson even made a visit! **8. Making STEM Connections** – The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council selected SCI's Making STEM Connections for the 2015-16 Scale-Up Program, giving educators across the state access to hands-on making activities for grades K-8.



MEET JAY JACKSON

Teacher at Goldfield-Dows Middle School

After 20 years of building Rube Goldberg machines with his sixth-grade students at Clarion-Goldfield-Dows Middle School, teacher Jay Jackson encouraged them to go beyond the usual pulleys and levers. This year, thanks to SCI's Making STEM Connections kits, they added something new: a switch.

“I want to show them the possibilities that are out there, and Making STEM Connections helps us do it.”

“It opened up a whole new Pandora’s Box,” Jackson said. “We had students making awesome machines.”

Making STEM Connections kits have transformed classrooms, youth groups and libraries across Iowa into dynamic makerspaces, complete with a variety of innovative materials. The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council selected SCI's Making STEM Connections for the 2015-16 Scale-Up Program, giving educators access to hands-on, interactive program for grades K-8.

Packaged by SCI staff and volunteers, each Making STEM Connections kit is designed for educators and librarians to incorporate in any subject, from science and math to reading and social studies.

“STEM should be all the time,” said Jackson. “I put the books we received from SCI up at the front of the classroom and encourage students to look at them for new things they want to try. I want to show them the possibilities that are out there, and Making STEM Connections helps us do it.”



MAKING *EDUCATION* CONNECTIONS

Building upon the natural inclination to innovate, SCI's Making STEM Connections program empowers students to explore STEM principles and create 21st Century Skills as they design, create and make. The program provides a kit including tools, teacher resources and lessons to inspire youth ages 5-14 through highly engaging, interactive and safe experiences.

EDUCATORS RECEIVE:

- Educational materials including lesson prompts, teacher resources and instructional framework
- Maker toolbox with a GoPro Camera, robotics components, MaKey MaKey, circuit materials, DC Motors, hand tools, soldering iron, sewing machine, safety goggles and first aid kit
- Literature for student engagement and understanding
- Professional development, focused on the making process and research behind its success

Making STEM Connections is available at no cost to schools, libraries and after-school programs through the Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council Scale-Up Program through application and award.



MEET HEATHER SCHOTT

Assistant Director of Diversity and Inclusion, The Principal

Diversity and inclusion fuel Des Moines' innovation ecosystem, creating companies that reflect and respect different experiences and backgrounds. But starting tough conversations surrounding difference can be tense, particularly in an office setting.

“... We can explore these experiences and the different ways we think about or see social issues or social problems.”

SCI staff helped facilitate these conversations with *RACE: Are We So Different?*, a provocative traveling exhibit that investigates the science of race and human variation through interactive components, historical artifacts and compelling photos.

For Principal, the experience transcended the traveling exhibit, and 500 Principal employees participated in formal training focused on inequality and difference through a business lens.

“By going off-site to a place like SCI, we can explore these experiences and the different ways we think about or see social issues or social problems,” said Heather Schott, Assistant Director of Diversity and Inclusion at The Principal. “It opens up a dialogue that, at the end of the day, allows us to come back into the office and have stronger partnerships and relationships within our teams to create products and services to meet our customers' needs.”

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Race: Are We So Different? is a project of the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, funded by Ford Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

MAKING *COMMUNITY* CONNECTIONS

It has always been SCI's goal to present our audiences with new ideas that stretch their ways of thinking and encourage thoughtful discourse. This exhibit helped spark important conversation regarding race in the United States and in our community.

YOUTH SYMPOSIUM PRESENTED BY BANKERS TRUST

On Tuesday, March 29, 2016, we hosted a Youth Symposium for high school students in Central Iowa. Through a variety of activities, students were challenged to change the way they think, talk about and address race and inequities in their schools.

RECOGNIZING RACE SERIES

This three-part series featured interactive discussions led by local experts. Participants heard from historians, psychologists, scientists, educators and more.

DIVERSITY DIALOGUES & THE DMPD

In addition to corporate and community groups who participated in Diversity Dialogues, we had the unique opportunity to facilitate diversity trainings with more than 400 officers in the Des Moines Police Department.

OTHER PARTNERS:

- Iowa State University's Social Justice Collaborative
- Drake University
- *The Des Moines Register*



MEET C.J. JOHNSON

SCI Preschool student

Bedtime stories at the Johnson household often take on new life thanks to the Science Center of Iowa Preschool. Rather than fantastic tales of dragons and knights, 4-year-old Celia – or “C.J.” – prefers to imagine a magical world filled with science and nature.

“They get to learn and go explore and have mini field trips within the different exhibits.”

Her mother, Anne Marie, explains, “One night when I was putting C.J. to bed, she said, ‘Mom, the queen bee lays the egg,’ and I didn’t know what she was talking about. She told this whole story about bees.”

Her classroom, led by master teacher Amy Gamble, had just completed a weeks-long lesson exploring bees’ life cycles. For Anne Marie and her husband, Brian, this project-based style of learning motivated them to enroll their daughter in the SCI Preschool. That and their extended classroom: SCI.

“They get to go explore things,” said Anne Marie. “They’re not confined to one room. They get to learn and go explore and have mini field trips within the different exhibits.”

C.J.’s 3-year-old sister, Kendall, will also enroll at the SCI Preschool for all the same reasons.



MAKING *EARLY* CONNECTIONS

With science and discovery as an overriding theme, the SCI Preschool sets the stage for 3- and 4-year-olds to make dynamic discoveries in the world that surrounds them, using all the incredible resources the Science Center of Iowa has to offer.

CURRICULUM

Hands-on activities, student-led projects and lots of play allow children to develop self-image as well as language, motor and social skills. Our preschool is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

EDUCATORS

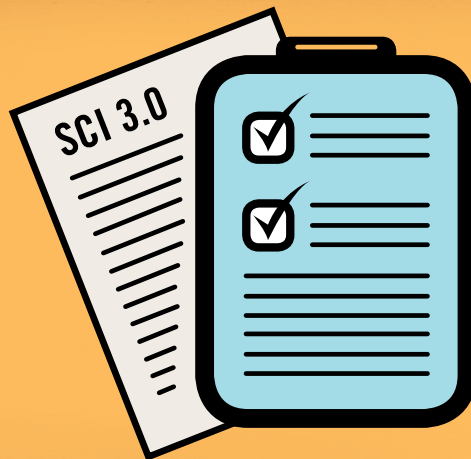
Accredited teachers with professional training in early childhood care and education provide positive, engaging classroom interactions.

FAMILIES

Preschoolers’ families benefit from SCI’s effort to link the classroom to the home and share in the growth and development of their child.

The SCI Preschool offers full-day and part-day classes year-round, providing education to **152 children annually**.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Our board and leadership are working with internal and external partners to continuously improve offerings.

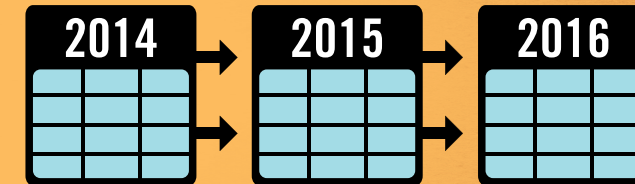
58%

Our annual fund donor retention rate is 58% compared to a 46% national average.

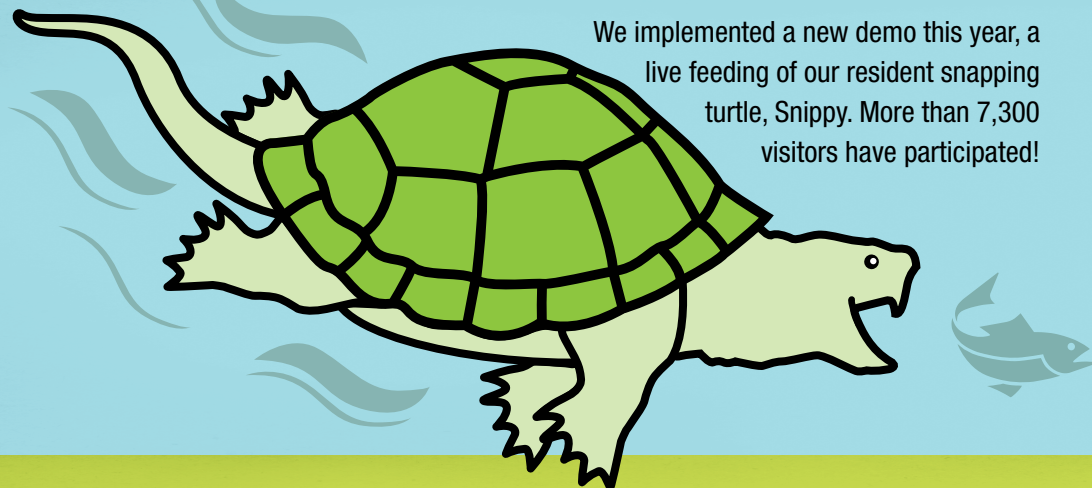
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NATIONAL AVERAGE 46%

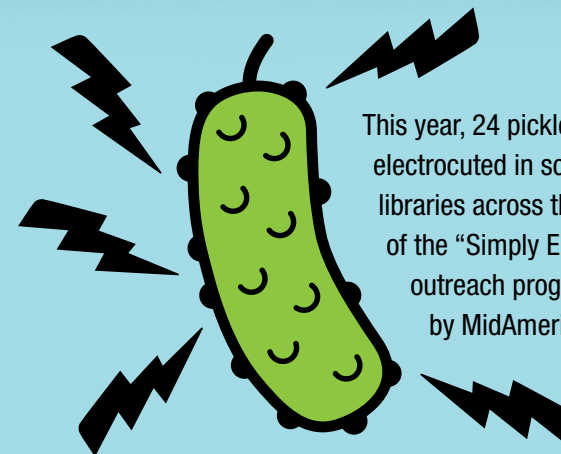
Corporate partners are making long-term investments in SCI with multi-year sponsorships (Fareway, Presenting Sponsor of *Small Discoveries*; UnityPoint Health – Des Moines, Health & Nutrition Sponsor)



BRINGING LEARNING TO LIFE



We implemented a new demo this year, a live feeding of our resident snapping turtle, Snippy. More than 7,300 visitors have participated!



This year, 24 pickles were electrocuted in schools and libraries across the state as part of the “Simply Electrifying” outreach program sponsored by MidAmerican Energy.

The new *Collectors’ Corner* mini-exhibit has encouraged future environmentalists to explore their neighborhoods and share their best finds from nature.



ADVANCING STEM LITERACY STATEWIDE

99

The number of counties in Iowa – and we had visitors from each of them this year! We also served visitors from all 50 states.

241

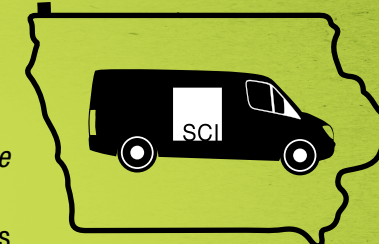
The number of Iowa communities – from Ackley to Yale – that SCI members call home. The top counties for membership are Polk, Dallas, Warren, Story and Jasper.

362

The number of educators who participated in SCI’s Making STEM Connections trainings, helping to bring makerspaces to classrooms across the state.

15,005

The number of students reached by *Science @ Your Site* outreach programs, which take the excitement of SCI on the road to schools and organizations across the state.



SPONSORSHIPS & GRANTS

The following contributions were made through generous support of specific projects, programs and films at the Science Center of Iowa and Blank IMAX Dome Theater between October 1, 2015, and September 30, 2016.

\$50,000 and above



\$25,000 and above



\$10,000 and above



Up to \$9,999

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SCI works to engage a wide community audience to develop meaningful partnerships and new initiatives that inspire curious minds of all ages. Partnerships and sponsorships from the following organizations help SCI engage and inspire lifelong learning in all of us.



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The following local governments committed a portion of their hotel/motel tax in FY 15–16:

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With sincere appreciation, the Science Center of Iowa acknowledges the extraordinary support of all our donors. Your gifts enable us to engage and inspire through programming, experience platforms, IMAX documentary films and so much more. Thank you for making this possible. We make every effort to acknowledge our donors appropriately. If we have made an error, please contact the Development Office at 515-274-6868 ext. 223 or kellyh@sciowa.org.

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especially Dr. Marlin Rice

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Each year, SCI engages more than 320,000 children, school groups and adults in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through interactive exhibits, live programs, IMAX films, special events, classes and camps. SCI’s Annual Fundraising Event and Auction contributes more than \$200,000 to these vast opportunities. Special thank to Ben Bruns, who served as the 2016 Annual Event Master of Ceremonies.

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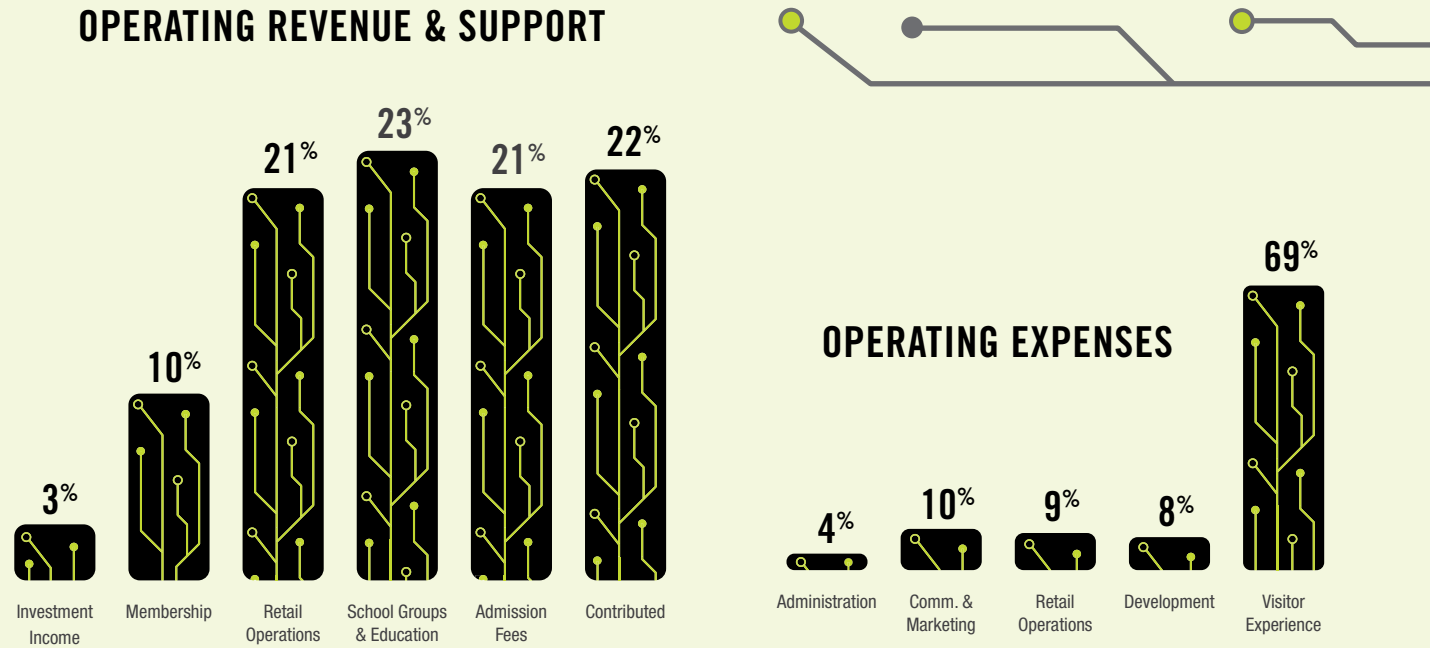
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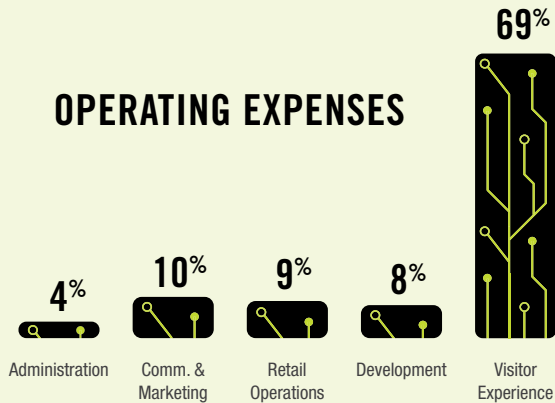


The Science Center of Iowa engages and inspires Iowans along their journey of lifelong science learning.

OPERATING REVENUE & SUPPORT



OPERATING EXPENSES



IMPACT REPORT, OCTOBER 2015–SEPTEMBER 2016

Total Participation = 305,539

Public Attendance = 257,090

Off-Site Programming = 15,545
(Outreach, Star Parties, Café Scientifique)

School Attendance = 32,904

The Science Center of Iowa is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization sustained by earned and contributed income.

OFFICERS

Chairman	Jeffrey Thompson Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office	Governance Chair	Sid Ramsey VP – Strategic Business Development & Marketing, UnityPoint Health – Des Moines
Vice Chair/Chair Elect	Chris Nelson, Ph.D. President & CEO, Kemin Industries, Inc.	Internal Affairs Committee Chair	Lisa Banker Senior Vice President - Finance, Wells Fargo & Company
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Jim Funcheon Division Human Resources Manager Bridgestone Americas, Inc.	Sheldon S. Ohringer Partner Entrepreneurial Technologies	Jeffrey Woessner, Ph.D. Genotyping Production Lead Monsanto
Michael Giudicessi Partner Faegre Baker Daniels LLP	Reed Pulver Director of Sales & Marketing All-State Industries	Adam Wright Vice President, Gas Delivery MidAmerican Energy

CURRENT SCI LEADERSHIP

Curt Simmons President & CEO	Cindy Mitchell-Kniss Vice President of Finance & Administration	Dan Raedeker Vice President of Community Engagement	Renee Shull-Harmon Vice President of Science Learning
Amber Forrest Director of Early Childhood	Steve Green Director of Facility Operations	Kent Maahs Director of Retail Operations	Molly Pins Director of Advancement
Patrick Rice Director of Learning Experiences	Emilee Richardson Director of Marketing & Public Relations	Allison Schwanebeck Director of Exhibits	

MAKING WITH RECYCLED PLASTIC

Materials

- *Parchment paper*
- *Iron*
- *Ironing board*
- *Scissors*
- *Plastic bags (various patterns and colors)*

Steps

1. Turn on the iron to a medium heat setting. Always be careful when leaving a heated iron unattended.
2. Cut out pieces of various shapes and colors from different plastic bags.
3. Arrange the pieces into a desired pattern on a piece of parchment paper.
4. Cover the pieces with an additional piece of parchment paper making sure to cover all of the plastic pieces.
5. Place the parchment sheets on the ironing board, and then gently press on them with the warm iron. Depending on how thick the plastic pieces are or how many you have layered, you may need to press with the iron for a longer time.
6. Peel away the parchment pieces to reveal a beautiful collage of fused plastic!

Why it matters: Approximately 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. More than one million bags are used every minute. This leads to millions of pounds of plastic that end up in landfills. Upcycling is a way to repurpose items instead of throwing them away or even recycling them. Fusing plastic provides a way to repurpose plastic bags by turning them into a type of textile that has many new uses. By rethinking how we use “disposable” items, we can make a positive impact on the environment and teach the next generation about responsible management of natural resources, a core concept of the Next Generation Science Standards.



Educators practice fusing plastics at a Making STEM Connections professional development event led by SCI.