



**DISCOVERY WORLD**

**Annual Report 2024**

A young child with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat over a brown long-sleeved shirt, is leaning over a wooden table. The child is looking up and reaching out with their right hand towards a pink balloon floating in the air. In the foreground, a large, shiny, metallic sphere is partially visible. To the left, a green balloon is also visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing other museum exhibits and a red button on the table.

**Discovery World leverages the awesome power of science and encourages you to embark on your own path to discovery!**

## **OUR MISSION**

To inspire generations to discover the wonders of science.

## **OUR VISION**

A world where every child is empowered to be curious and explore endlessly.

# LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Discovery World Community,

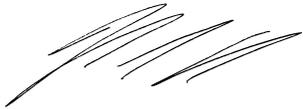
As we reflect on 2024, we are proud of Discovery World's exponential growth in Educational Outreach and our expanded commitment to engaging Early Science Learners through new spaces like the Exploration Station and Doodle Studio. These additions, along with increased community outreach and collaborative partnerships, brought STEM learning to more families than ever before.

Our programs continue to break down barriers and open doors for children and families, ensuring every child has the chance to explore, create, and dream.

Looking to 2025, we are building on this momentum with new experiences and deeper collaborations that empower the next generation of innovators.

You - our members, donors, partners, and guests - made this possible. Your support fuels our mission and makes Discovery World a place where science comes to life. As we embark on another year of growth and discovery, we invite you to join us in shaping an even brighter future together.

With gratitude and excitement,



John Emmerich  
*President and CEO*



# WHO WE ARE

Imagine a world where curiosity comes to life and seeing the world differently is just an “Aha!” away.

Discovery World is an extraordinary experience devoted to sharing the wonders of science and igniting a love of endless exploration. Nestled on the shores of Lake Michigan, Discovery World is Wisconsin’s premier science museum featuring a world-class aquarium, hands-on interactive exhibits, and immersive educational experiences.

Families, students, and learners of all ages embark on a lifelong learning adventure where they will meet fascinating creatures, create and play in virtual worlds, tinker in labs, build towering structures, launch rockets, and more.

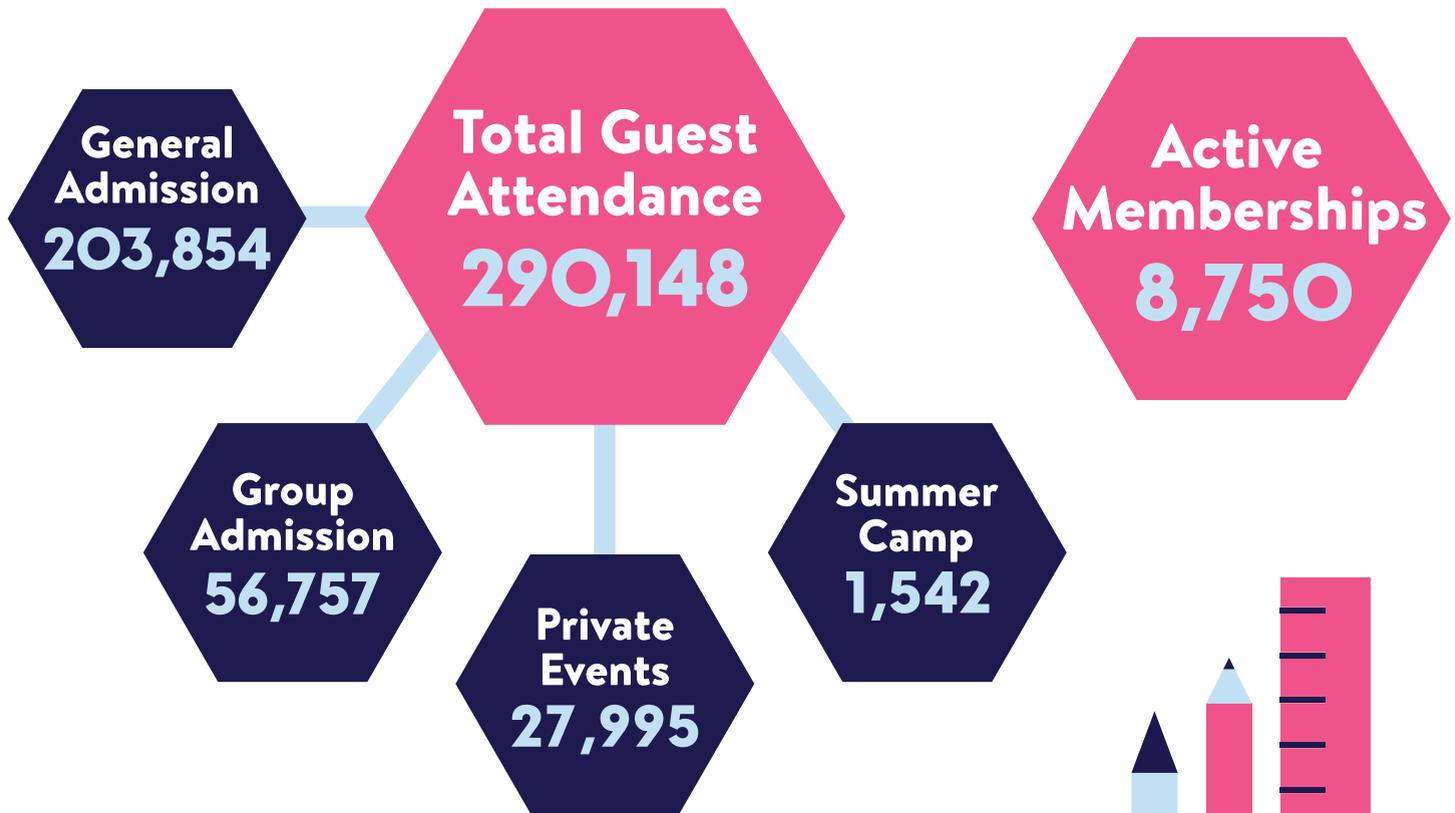
What if you could deep dive into the underwater curiosities within Wisconsin’s largest aquarium? Where you can discover aquatic animals from around the world, travel alongside sharks through a Caribbean trek, and endlessly explore the wonders of Lake Michigan.

But Discovery World is more than a cool building on the lake. Our expansive learning programs, onsite field trips, summer camps, and educational outreach initiatives bring science learning to classrooms and communities, empowering learners of all ages to see the world in new ways.



# ATTENDANCE NUMBERS

For the second year in a row, Discovery World welcomed more than **200,000** general admission guests in 2024.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## WE SERVE AS A PRIMARY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN

- Discovery World's Education and Aquarium teams sparked curiosity through **interactive STEM learning** and **memorable animal encounters**. From our ten state-of-the-art labs to Wisconsin's largest aquarium, we inspired students and families to explore science and connect with the natural world.
- After years in Discovery World's **robotics camps**, Ziddane turned his passion into a Rockwell Automation internship. Now a high school senior, he applied his STEM skills in the real world. Our camps ignited wonder, build skills, and open doors to exciting opportunities in science and tech.
- Discovery World hosted one of the nation's largest science center summer camps, engaging over **1,500 campers** across 11 weeks of hands-on STEM exploration, skill-building, and creativity.
- Discovery World welcomed young storytellers on the autism spectrum for a weekend of creativity, animation, and digital discovery in partnership with **Islands of Brilliance**. Using tablets and photo software, participants animated Claymation videos, blending art and technology while expressing their unique vision.
- Discovery World completed its second year of **KultureCity** sensory inclusion training, equipping staff to recognize sensory needs and create welcoming experiences. This ongoing partnership underscored our commitment to accessibility.
- In 2024, Discovery World hosted **623 on-site lab sessions**, engaging **13,710 participants** in hands-on STEM experiences that brought science to life for students and educators across our community.



# DID YOU KNOW?

# WE SERVE AS A PRIMARY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN



# DID YOU KNOW?

## WE ELEVATE GUEST EXPERIENCE WITH ENGAGING EVENTS

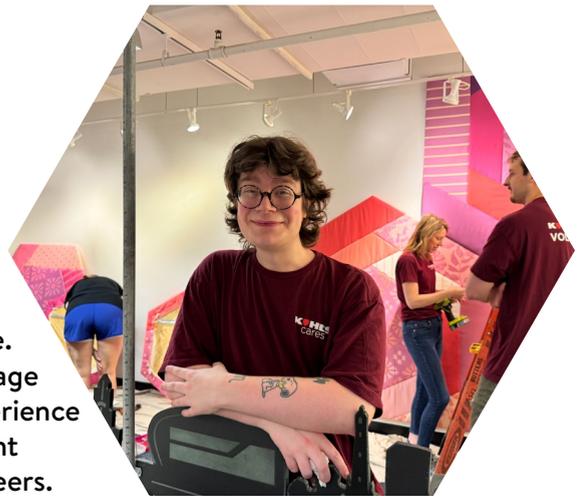
**Girls & STEM**, in partnership with Northwestern Mutual and Rockwell Automation, connected girls with inspiring female STEM role models through hands-on activities from 20+ exhibitors, advancing our mission to foster future STEM leaders.



**Mermaid Echo** brought magic and education to life with 9 performances, reaching over 4,500 guests in 2024.



Discovery World and **Kohl's** partnered to unveil a vibrant **new mural** in honor of a beloved colleague. The mural welcomes field trip students with a message of curiosity and discovery while enhancing the experience for young learners. Former design intern and current Kohl's team member, Josh, was one of many volunteers.

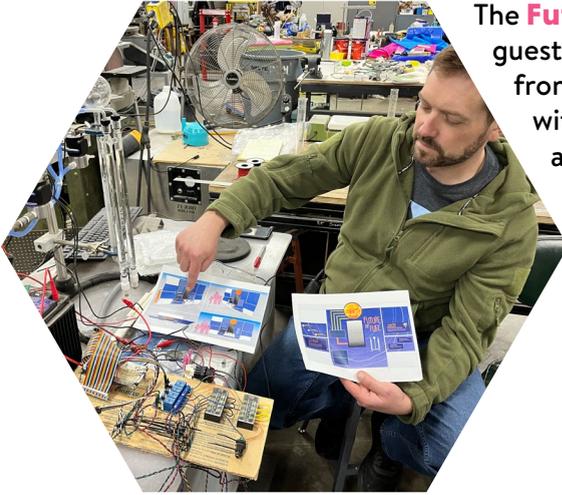


Discovery World collaborated with **Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC)** to enhance Automation Everywhere, in partnership with Rockwell Automation, and debuted student-built mini-exhibits at the Discovery World hosted **Robotics Showcase** event.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## WE CONTINUED TO ENHANCE OUR EXPERIENCES WITH BEHIND THE SCENES WORK



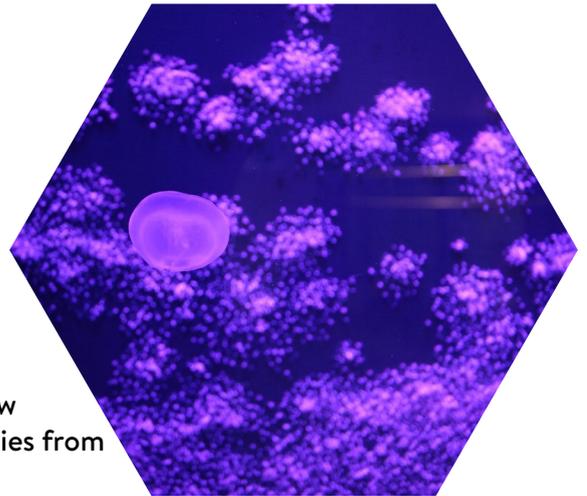
The **Future of Fuel**, a part of We Energies' Power On Exhibit, immersed guests in the science of PV powered electrolysis with technical support from We Energies and chemistry support from MilliporeSigma. Guests witnessed hydrogen and oxygen separation through platinum coils and custom glasswork, experiencing real reactions that showcase the power of clean energy.

Big updates came to **The Challenge**. Our staff overhauled the ship's pilot house with graphic refreshes and new activities, like Kraken's Cookbook in the galley and the Serpent's Scavenger Hunt.



Our **Flex Farm hydroponic system** thrived in the Freshwater Sustainability Lab, giving students and families a close-up look at sustainable farming. Our aquatic residents enjoyed the homegrown lettuce, a tasty way to learn about hydroponics.

Discovery World's jellyfish breeding program reached new milestones in 2024, showcasing the full **Moon Jellyfish** life cycle. With 10 new additions, guests observed 24 mesmerizing jellies from babies to mature adults.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## WE EXPANDED OUR AUDIENCE TO INCLUDE EARLY SCIENCE LEARNERS

Discovery World launched **Doodle Studio**, engaging young learners in technology through creativity with support from the PNC Foundation. Guests animated their designs in digital environments. In its first six weeks, Doodle Studio attracted 17,000 visitors, sparking interest in digital design and innovation.



**Exploration Station** immersed early science learners in the world of trains through dramatic play and hands-on activities. Kids operated the ticket window, engaged in storytelling, and explored exhibits that inspired creativity and problem-solving. Volunteers from **Walthers Model Railroading** enhanced the experience, bringing trains to life.



Discovery World launched **Early Science Learner** classes in 2024, engaging students with hands-on exploration of core science concepts. *Elementary Explorers: Sound* wowed students with interactive stations on how vibrations create sound. Thanks to strong feedback, two new classes will launch before the 2025-2026 school year.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## WE BROADEN PARTICIPATION FOR STEM OPPORTUNITIES



- Discovery World's **Access Program** broke down financial barriers by offering discounted admission and memberships to qualifying guests. In 2024, it opened doors for **1,211 member families** and welcomed **17,333 individual visitors**.
- Discovery World's **Outreach Program grew by 59% in 2024**, increasing the number of participants in schools and communities across Wisconsin. Each visit reached more students, expanding the impact of hands-on STEM learning and strengthening the foundation for future discovery.
- We partnered with **Future Urban Leaders**, an organization expanding leadership and enrichment opportunities for Milwaukee's youth, to deliver hands-on, afterschool STEM labs to almost **30 students** in grades 2–8 at Milwaukee College Prep – Lloyd Street, inspiring young minds beyond the classroom.
- Discovery World's **School Access Support** program provided hands-on STEM experiences to **10,415 students** in 2024, a **52% increase from 2023**, thanks to the generous support of Theodore W Batterman Family Foundation Inc., Brady Corporation, Johnson Controls, Rockwell Automation, U.S. Bank, and We Energies.
- Discovery World's **Family Field Trips** welcomed over 750 participants for hands-on STEM learning alongside trusted community partners like the **Boys & Girls Club** and **Milwaukee Public Schools**. These engaging experiences made science fun, interactive, and accessible for families across Milwaukee. Through partnerships, we expanded opportunities and inspiring a deeper connection to education.

# DID YOU KNOW?

# WE BROADEN PARTICIPATION FOR STEM OPPORTUNITIES

- Discovery World joined community partners at the **MPS STEM Fair** for the third straight year supporting 450 students as they showcased projects at the Baird Center. We awarded a full summer camp scholarship to a standout winner and celebrated young women in STEM.
- Discovery World participated in **Milwaukee Bucks STEM Day at FISERV Forum**, engaging 225 students with interactive science activities, and joined the Bucks Advisory Committee to help shape future STEM initiatives.
- “Aha!” moment! After participating in one of our **outreach programs**, a student named Khloe taught her mom to make a homemade iPad stylus using simple materials, showing how our mission inspires curiosity at every age.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## DISCOVERY WORLD IS YOUR PLACE FOR FUN SCIENCE LEARNING

Through strategic marketing campaigns, we reached over **11 million impressions** across social media, our website, radio, and earned media – increasing visibility to science. Each touchpoint amplified fun science learning in our community and served as an invitation to explore.



For the second year, Discovery World was named a **TOP 10 Science Museum** by USA TODAY.



Discovery World brought hands-on science to **Summerfest** and **Brewers Weather Day**, partnering with TMJ4 and CBS 58. **Over 8,200 attendees** explored meteorology through interactive demos, capped by a dramatic cloud explosion that made both events unforgettable.



**Jack the Great** made headlines at Discovery World when he turned off our new exterior lighting provided by Wisconsin Lighting Lab, illuminating our building, creating a bold, welcoming beacon for families.



# VOLUNTEERS

**292 VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS**  
**10,352** Volunteer/Intern Hours

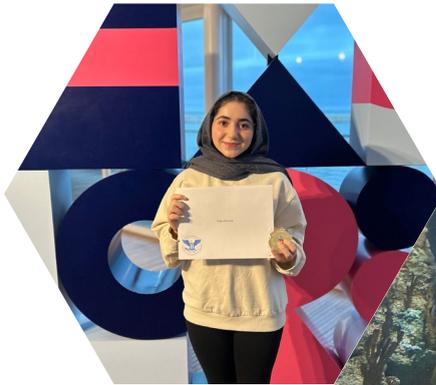
**8 COLLEGE INTERNS**  
Total Hours: **1,192**

**7 HIGH SCHOOL INTERNS**  
Total Hours: **1,091**

**3** teen volunteers earned the **Presidential Volunteer Service Awards** last year. Over **357** hours were at the Gold Level and over **100** were at the Bronze Level.

**12** volunteers each gave **150+ hours**.

**1** volunteer gave **622 hours!**



Discovery World's Internship Program engaged **6 interns** who contributed **over 1,000 hours** to key projects with support from a dedicated funder starting in the summer of 2024. Each intern gained hands-on experience, professional skills, and a paid stipend. With growing interest, the program continues to expand across departments and shape future leaders in STEM and nonprofit work.

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Discovery World is expanding educational support and immersive experiences for all guests. Our vision includes scaling outreach across Wisconsin to **make STEM learning more accessible** and positioning Discovery World as a key community resource.



New transformative projects such as **The Life of Water** and a new **Aquarium** viewing experience will deepen engagement through hands-on learning and immersive environments. These initiatives, along with ongoing improvements, will strengthen our role as a leading STEM resource, inspiring the next generation to discover the wonders of science.



# FINANCIAL NUMBERS

## Earned Revenue

**\$5,659,701**

## Contributed Revenue

**\$3,178,084**

Discovery World has built a strong community presence without any current federal funding and is poised to scale with future support.

Discovery World is proud to operate as a debt-free organization, ensuring financial stability and long-term sustainability.

**Thank you to everyone who helped us provide all of the "Aha!" moments through their generous in-kind donations.**



# Board of Directors 2024

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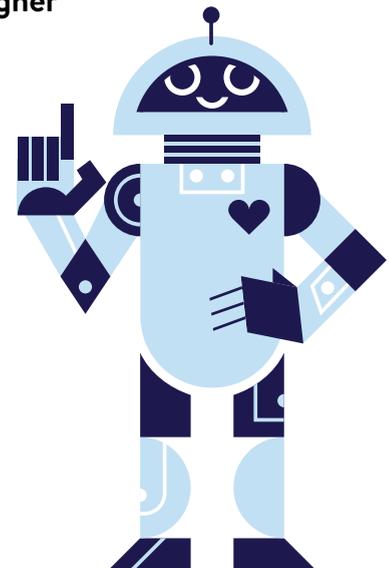
Adonica Randall

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# Donor Recognition - Corporate & Foundation Gifts

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Accenture	Ellenbecker Financial Group	Komatsu Mining Corp Foundation, Inc.	Seltzer-Ornst Construction Company LLC
American Family Dreams Foundation	Emory T. Clark Family Charitable Foundation	KPMG LLP	Southwest Airlines
Anonymous Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation	Eppstein Uhen Architects	M3 Insurance Foundation	Stella H. Jones Foundation
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Associated Bank	FIS Global	Manpower Group	The Coronado Fund
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Colton Charitable Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation	Jewish Community Foundation (Danni and Shel Gendelman Memorial Endowment)	PNC	VJS Construction Services
Daniel M. Soref Charitable Trust	Johnson Controls Foundation	PPG Industries Foundation	von Briesen & Roper, s.c.
Debbink Family Foundation	Johnson Financial Group	Project Management Institute – Southeast WI	We Energies Foundation
Delta Dental	JP Cullen	Quarles	William and Janice Godfrey Family Foundation Trust
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	Kohl's	Rockwell Automation	



# Individual Gifts

*\*This list represents donors at our major giving level or above*

Adam and Rachel Bellmer

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Allyson and Aaron Bubb

Amit and Jeannine Nanavati

Barbara Fuldner

Barry and Jen Elliott

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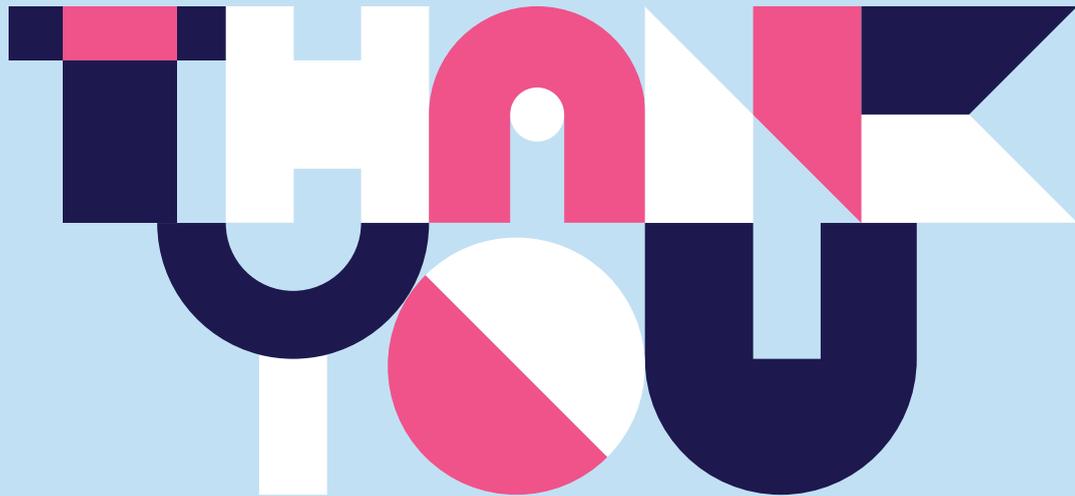
Thomas and Deborah Degnan

TJ Morley and Renee Kubesh

Ward and Lynn Komorowski



**Thank you to everyone who  
supports Discovery World!**



**DISCOVERY WORLD**

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