



North Dakota's
**Gateway to
Science**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



A letter from our CEO

Gateway to Science opened in November 1994 in an empty storefront at the Gateway Mall in Bismarck. At that time, Founding Scientist Frank Koch had a vision to create a place where anyone could be comfortable with science. Much has changed since that time, but Frank's original vision remains our guiding principle.

We are proud to serve our entire state with unique informal STEM education opportunities. Because we are North Dakota's Gateway to Science, our STEM Educators travel around the state offering engaging, hands-on STEM learning experiences for K-12 students and communities.

After 30 years, I continue to be honored to lead this organization. Our team has grown into a robust group of STEM enthusiasts who are committed to fulfilling our mission and making North Dakota's Gateway to Science a joyful experience for everyone.

Sincerely,

Beth Demke
Chief Executive Officer



Year in Review



In 2024, we celebrated our 30th anniversary with approximately 1,500 people attending our birthday bash. It has been an incredible year of unforgettable moments. We're so grateful for every milestone and opportunity, and we couldn't have done it without the amazing support of our members, donors, partners, and team!

It's been a year of learning, growing, and celebrating together—here's to another amazing year ahead.

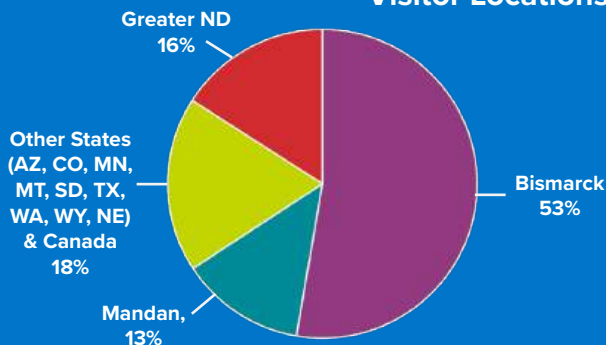
Year Highlights



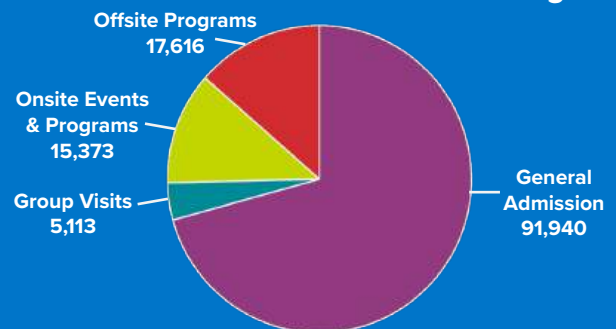
- Served groups from public, private, and home schools, scout troops, family reunions, assisted living centers, correctional facilities, and more.
- Provided educational outreach across the state through STEMzones and Workshops. Facilitated rental events like corporate events, graduations, and weddings to support the mission.
- Held summer camps, mini camps, and after-school clubs for thousands of students.
- Maintained focus on a commitment to Affordability & Accessibility by offering programs like Museums4All, Blue Star Museums, Agency Admissions, Scholarships, and reduced admission at events.
- Held new and fan-favorite events to encourage the community to participate in STEM activities such as STEM Spooktacular, International Observe the Moon Night, Gateway to Play, Preschool Discovery Hour, STEM Expo, and our end-of-year Noon Year's Eve Celebration.



Visitor Locations



Admission & Programs



Board of Directors

Board Officers

Chris Riedman
President
Church of St. Joseph

Tara Feil, Ph.D.
Vice President
CHI St. Alexius Health

Brent Bogar
Secretary
AE2S

Karol Riedman
Treasurer
ND Health and Human Services

Board Members

Jason Anderson
North Dakota Information Technology

Linda Gutensohn, Ph.D.
University of Mary (Retired)

Tom Hutchens, M.D.
Mid Dakota Clinic (Retired)

Kay Koch
ND State Water Commission (Retired)

Dan Leingang Ph.D.
Bismarck State College

Tim Lervick
Crowley Fleck Attorneys (Retired)

Karie Mischel
City of Mandan

Brett Mitchell
Bismarck Public Schools

Eric Olson
Bowman and Brooke LLP

Shawn Riley
Bisblox

Heather Sandness Nelson
Essentia Health

Mike Wamboldt
Marathon Petroleum

Doug Zinke
Starion Bank

Key Staff Members

Executive

Beth Demke
Chief Executive Officer
Ashley Steckler
Chief Operating Officer

Education

Hope Burdolski
Outreach & Education Director
Alisha Kelim
Onsite Education Director
Annie Beck
STEM Educator
JoDe Knutson Person
STEM Educator
Emily Montgomery
STEM Educator
Brooke Irion
Personnel Manager

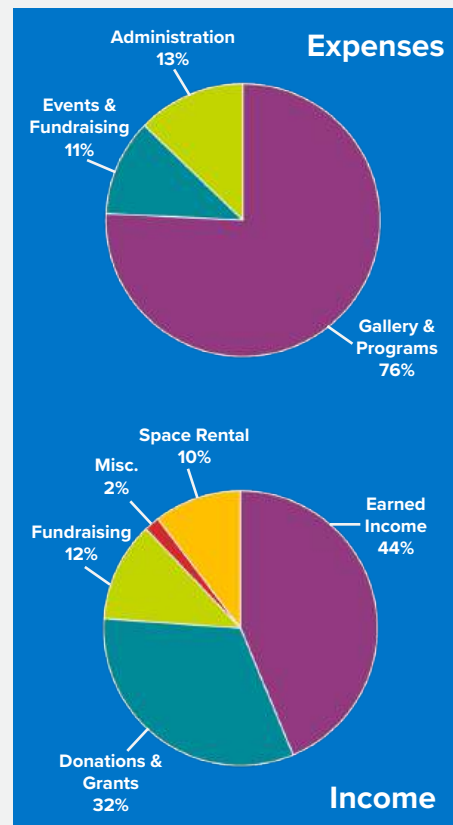
Janie Van Beek
Visitor Services Assistant Manager
Ekaterina Zimmerman
Visitor Services Assistant Manager

Operations

Tim Olson
Facility & Operations Director
Kristie Petersen
Events & Operations Manager
David Brousseau
Exhibit Technician
MeriCarol Storhaug
Office Manager

Public Engagement

Quinn Deibert
Marketing Manager
Dawn Gullingsrud
Community Relations Manager



Looking Ahead...

Outdoor Explorium



“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.”—John Muir

Imagine an outdoor space that brings a world beyond the classroom to enhance STEM benefits through nature exploration in hands-on, informal, and genuine interactions.

In this new and exciting multi-use dimension at NDGTS, children and adults can work together with nature to discover lifelong lessons of caring for and conserving our earth. In the assorted gathering areas, there will be a myriad of opportunities for learning and entertainment for all ages.

This outdoor space will provide a living laboratory to engage with the natural world and experience the beauty and wonderment of the sky, the weather, the trees, the gardens, the birds and bees.

Nature inspires curiosity, awe, intriguing questions, close observation, problem-solving skills, and high levels of engagement. Nature can be a powerful teacher.

“Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.”—Thomas Berry

Strategic Plan

2024 was our 30th year and gave us a chance to look back at our accomplishments, while also looking forward to what's next. We have been honored to work with members of our community and our stakeholders to establish strategic goals that will guide the science center for the next three years.

Strategic Plan Goals

- NDGTS will transition its board from a working board to a governance-focused body that provides strategic oversight and long-term planning.
- NDGTS will invest in organizational stability and smooth leadership transitions.
- NDGTS will explore expanding its facilities and ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- NDGTS will position itself as a statewide and regional leader in STEM education and world class center for workforce recruitment and economic development.

Mission: To inspire the discovery of science through hands-on experiences.

Vision: North Dakota's Gateway to Science envisions becoming the region's leading STEM hub, inspiring curiosity and empowering future scientists and problem-solvers through hands-on learning and community-driven initiatives in an inclusive environment.

Core Values

Joy

We're passionate about STEM. We're excited to explore science through wonder, and bring the joy of science to everyone we reach. Joy often arises from a combination of observation, discovery, and FUN. We approach this work with positivity, gratitude, compassion, and JOY. Creating a fun learning environment for others means having fun ourselves.

Experimentation

We're curious learners, examiners, and innovators. We're constantly observing, asking questions, assessing, and improving the ways we do things. We are not afraid to take calculated risks, and when we fail, we leverage lessons learned and experiment with new approaches. We model these ideals for our visitors, students, and partners. Trying new things with a humble approach helps us continually grow.

Collaboration

We're a collaborative team. We encourage each other and celebrate shared accomplishments—the whole of solutions is greater than any one person's idea. We respect each other's different perspectives and areas of expertise, even when we disagree. We appreciate that giving one another feedback is giving us all tools to succeed. Working together creates a cohesive, mutually supportive space for our best work.

Community

We're part of the community. We approach our work through inclusion, equity, and accessibility. We work to create a family-friendly environment that welcomes everyone and fosters a sense of belonging. Every decision we make considers our members, visitors, partners, and community. We carry this out through initiatives like Accessibility and Affordability for All. Belonging doesn't magically appear; it's built through intentional space making.

