

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



North Dakota's
**Gateway to
Science**



A letter from our Board President

It is an immense privilege to be involved in the mission and impact of North Dakota's Gateway to Science, and I warmly invite all who read this report to continue their support and involvement, or to visit our organization and learn how to become an involved member. As the State of North Dakota's only hands-on science center, North Dakota's Gateway to Science plays a vital role in inspiring and equipping the next generation of scientists and critical thinkers. Our supporters, whether financial or volunteer, make this effort possible. Throughout our 32 year history, we have continued to inspire the scientist within each person we engage with, and we have seen how our vision has transformed lives through our approach of inspiring curiosity, empowering ideas, and supporting innovation.

As President of the Board of Directors, I have had the joy of witnessing firsthand the profound and continuing impact our organization has on learners and curious minds of all ages, and we are grateful to our stakeholders, members, and visitors for continuing to power this outreach and mission. We hope this report showcases the immense value and impact our organization brings to our region. Rest assured, our mission is ongoing—there is so much more to grow, build, discover, and inspire. We look forward to what the future holds, and we thank you for your support and confidence as we continue to blaze a path for curious minds.

Chris Riedman, *President*
Board of Directors



Board of Directors

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City of Mandan

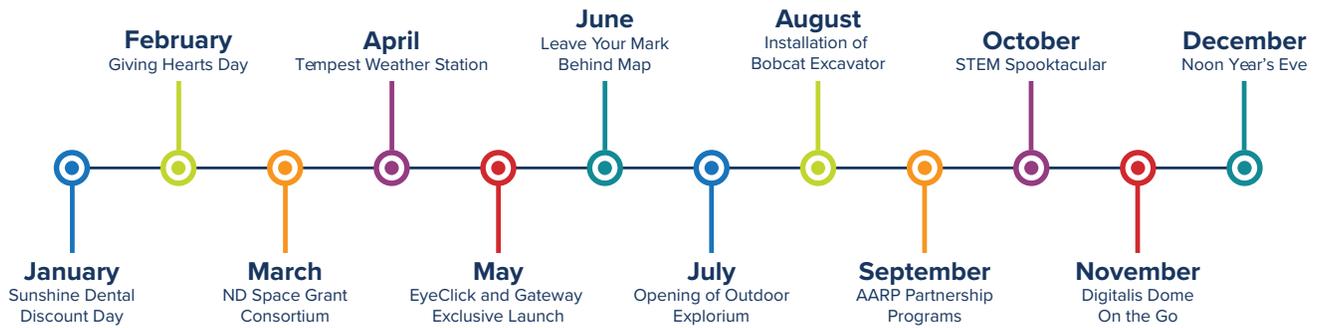
Brett Mitchell
Bismarck Public Schools

Shawn Riley
Bisblox

Heather Sandness Nelson
Essentia Health

Mike Wamboldt
Marathon Petroleum

Year Highlights



- The opening of Outdoor Explorium created a gateway to nature exploration and involved partnerships with MDU Resources, ND Natural Resources Trust, Doosan/Bobcat Engineers and the NDSU Master Gardeners.
- Gateway to Science on the Go vans logged nearly 24,000 miles, serving over 200 schools and community partners across the state with STEMzones and workshops.
- Our Visitor Guides hosted 150 field trips for students of all ages from local and regional schools, community groups, scout troops, and more.
- Set against the stunning backdrop of the Missouri River, our facility became a memorable venue for 12 weddings and hosted 57 corporate meetings and events. 77 children celebrated their birthdays with us, too!
- We expanded offerings to present a monthly schedule of adults-only programming on a variety of topics including Chemistry, Mixology, Wine Pairing, Digital Literacy, Saunas & Cold Plunges, and Science Misconceptions.



A Letter from our CEO

North Dakota's Gateway to Science was founded on a simple but powerful idea: when we work alongside other organizations and individuals, we expand what's possible. Collaboration allows us to reach more students and families and deepen the impact of every experience we create.

As I look back on 2025, I'm especially proud of the partnerships that helped bring the Outdoor Explorium and pollinator garden to life last summer. Contractors, volunteers, and our own team came together to design, build, plant, and care for this vibrant outdoor space. It's a place that will continue to grow—literally and figuratively—offering new ways for visitors to explore the natural world.

In many ways, 2025 was truly a year of partnerships. We forged new connections, strengthened existing ones, and continued working with organizations that share our passion for hands-on STEM learning. Our team is innovative, talented, and always seeking collaborators whose strengths complement our own. NDGTS has also become a partner of choice for groups looking to meaningfully engage students and families through interactive STEM experiences.

As we head into the year ahead, I'm excited about the new opportunities these relationships will bring. Together, we'll continue creating spaces and programs that inspire curiosity, spark discovery, and make science accessible to all. Thank you for being part of this journey—your support and partnership make everything we do possible.

Beth Demke
Chief Executive Officer



Key Staff Members

Leadership

Beth Demke
Chief Executive Officer

Ashley Steckler
Chief Operating Officer

Alisha Kelim
Education Director

Education

Hope Burdolski
STEM Education Specialist

Annie Beck
STEM Educator

Emily Montgomery
STEM Educator

Visitor Services

Ekaterina Zimmerman
Visitor Services Manager

Janie Van Beek
Visitor Services Assistant Manager

Amber Friez
Visitor Services Supervisor

Brittany Briese
Visitor Services Supervisor

Operations

Tim Olson
Facility & Operations Director

Kristie Petersen
Events & Operations Manager

David Brousseau
Exhibit Technician

Sherri Neis
Office Manager

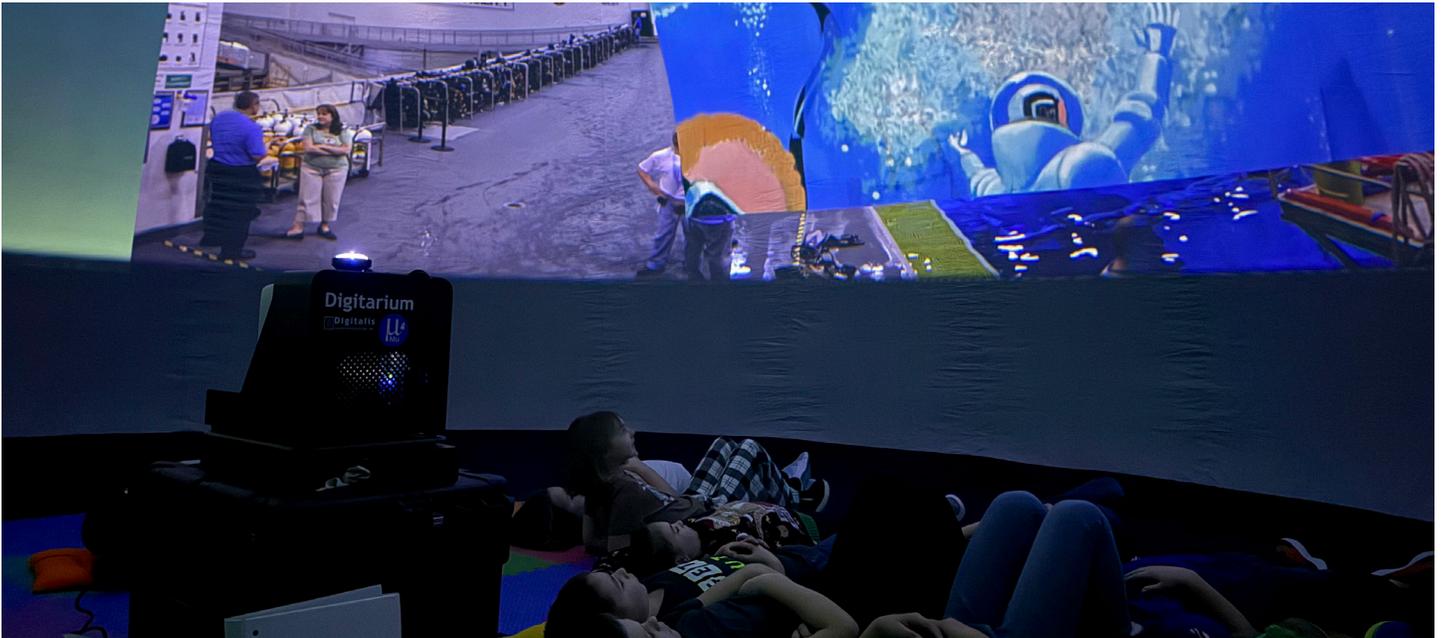
MeriCarol Storhaug
Operations Project Manager

Public Engagement

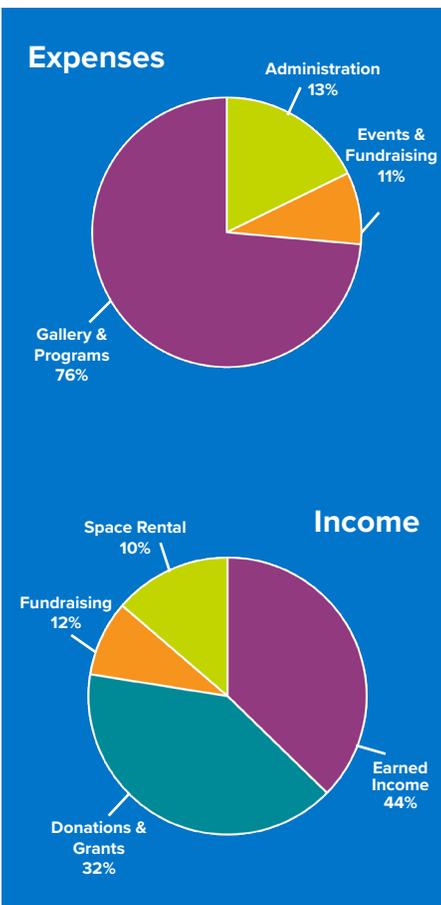
Quinn Deibert
Marketing Manager

Dawn Gullingsrud
Guest Experience Coordinator

Looking Ahead...



Investments in new resources during 2026 will open possibilities for exciting experiences in the coming year and beyond. The **Digitalis Dome** is now available for rural schools through our Gateway to Science on the Go program, and it's open to our visitors monthly on Thursday evenings.



The **Outdoor Explorium** continues to be a work in progress with new opportunities to enhance our visitors' experience. We are looking forward to the addition of Musical Exhibits this spring, sponsored by the Levi and Bethany Andrist family.



EyeClick uses motion-based technology to turn physical movement into playful, immersive learning. Our Exhibits Team is using this innovative technology to develop custom gallery experiences.

As we grow and strengthen our partnerships in 2026, we'll open the door to even more opportunities. Our team will reach more students and families, connect with a wider range of ages, and show up in communities we haven't served before.

NDGTS Mission

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.

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.

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.



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Platinum



Gold



Copper



Sustaining Members

Silver Sustaining Members

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Beth & Keith Demke
Theresa & Ryan Hegge
Adam Spooner
Karen Traeholt
Curt & Bev Walth

Sustaining Members

Jason & Cathryn Anderson
Levi & Bethany Andrist
Dave & Diane Clinton
Sparb & Michelle Collins
Ryan & Ashley David
Joel & Linda Gutensohn
Jessica & Tyler Hardy
Tom & Katie Hutchens
Curt & Lesley Icenogle
Stefanie & Adam Jangula
Thomas & Shelley Kelsch

Kay Koch
Tim & Kelly Lervick
Jay & Jackie Lundstrom
Kim & Toby Marman
Karol & Michael Riedman
Christina Tello-Skjerseth &
Brent Skjerseth
Gregg & Sandy Wiche
Scott & Shonda Wild

