

Science Museum of Virginia
Annual Report
2025





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The Science Museum of Virginia was named a 2025 Newsweek Readers’ Choice Award winner. Ranked in third place, the recognition places the Science Museum in the top one percent of STEM-focused institutions in the United States.



Celebrating a Historic Year

The Science Museum of Virginia is proud of the growth and success achieved in FY25, and we want to express gratitude to our guests, volunteers and donors who made it possible. Our visitation numbers exceeded 595,000, the highest total in our 47 year history. Our Science within Reach programs for seniors, teens, low-income families and families with special needs are all reaching their highest number of participants. We are now under construction with the Northern Virginia Science Center, by far the largest capital project in our history, and we are in progress with a number of projects that will preserve our historic home, Broad Street Station. The community response to The Green has inspired us to expand this urban greenspace, extending it down DMV Drive. By any measure, last year was a great year for the Science Museum.

Not all success is quantifiable. Great organizations impact people's lives. We try hard every day to be relevant to our guests, members, partners and communities. We are constantly identifying ways to make science understandable and meaningful. This shows up in many forms: a volunteer sharing information with a guest, a new interactive exhibition, a social media post about a current science topic or a morning talk about the hidden science all around us. These activities result in special moments where wonder and curiosity are transformed into delight and impact.

As you read this report, we hope you will share in our enthusiasm as you were a big part of our success. We could not achieve these accomplishments without the generous support of our donors. Thank you for supporting the Science Museum and caring about our mission.



Richard C. Conti
*Chief Wonder Officer,
Science Museum of Virginia*



Robert A. Winn, MD
*Chair, Science Museum of Virginia
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John H. Wick IV
*President, Science Museum of Virginia
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A Partnership For The Community

Since 1977, the Science Museum of Virginia has served as a community gathering place, a leader in informal learning practices and a resource for STEM education. As a state agency for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Science Museum's mission is to inspire all Virginians to enrich their lives through science.

The Science Museum receives state funding to support daily operations, but many of the programs and initiatives that help us fully realize our mission require private philanthropy to come to fruition and grow.

The Science Museum of Virginia Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established to support the educational mission of the Science Museum. By connecting passionate, like-minded community leaders with the Science Museum, the Foundation helps ensure our community impact is not only sustainable, but is also able to adapt and expand to meet community needs.

Last year, the Foundation raised more than \$3 million dollars to support the Science Museum's mission, with support for projects and programming that foster accessibility for all, generational curiosity and environmental sustainability.



Accessibility for All

“Thank you Science Museum of Virginia for making it possible for everyone to have the opportunity to experience the fun and learning you have to offer. ”

When Daniell Whitlow made this comment on our Facebook page, she was referring to the Library Pass Program. Her comment encapsulates the essence of the Science Within Reach initiative: to remove barriers and embrace inclusive practices that help make the Science Museum experience welcoming to all.

Cherita Paul, Community Engagement Coordinator, leads our Science Within Reach programs. Her work focuses on getting to know the community and what will make the biggest impact on increasing accessibility. “Everyone has a different life experience, and for some, those experiences may pose a barrier to engaging with the Science Museum. By forming relationships with different subsets of the community, I’m able to introduce them to the programs we offer today and they’re able to help me shape where the program needs to grow for the future.”





“I have been unable to go to many places with my family due to my reactions to noise. This event, and seeing my kids so happy, has been amazing!”

“Frequently I hear that families don’t have the finances to support regular visits or memberships to cultural institutions,” Paul said. “Our Museums for All program has grown exponentially over the last few years. It’s our most utilized program under Science Within Reach.”

Museums for All offers admission for low-income families for \$2 or less per person. Last year over 19,100 guests visited using the program. The Science Museum also offers a [Museums for All membership](#), where families pay just \$25 for an annual membership. The Science Museum currently has over 1,280 Museums for All member households that visited over 19,700 times last year.

Feeling safe and accepted is another important part of inclusion. [Minds of All Kinds](#) is a free, quarterly event designed for guests with disabilities to enjoy the Science Museum in a less crowded environment. As one Veteran and Minds of All Kinds participant said, “I have been unable to go to many places with my family due to my reactions to noise. This event, and seeing my kids so happy, has been amazing!”

Featuring programming with reduced sound and light levels as well as activities with partners like Autism Society of Central Virginia, VA Voice and the Virginia Department of Blind and Visually Impaired, Minds of All Kinds welcomed 613 guests last year and almost 4,100 guests since it began in 2017.



Sometimes, the community just needs to be invited in. That's why over the last year, Paul and volunteers from the Science Museum focused on going outside the Science Museum walls at events such as the annual ¿Qué Pasa? Festival, the Richmond Multicultural Fest, the Autism Society of Central Virginia's annual Duck Race and even the Richmond Symphony to engage with more than 9,000 in the community.

Paul has also worked to grow the Library Pass Program, which invites the community to check out a pass to the Science Museum at their local library. Currently offered at all branches of the Richmond Public Library, Petersburg Library, Powhatan County Library and Williamsburg

Regional Libraries systems, as well as through the Pamunkey Indian Reservation, the program gave 1,129 guests access for free last year and is in high demand. According to Chandra McPherson, Powhatan County Library Director, "We needed a second pass for our library because the demand is so great. For some of our families, this was the first time they could visit the Science Museum."

The utilization of the Science Within Reach programs speaks to the community's need. "Almost every day I talk with another group, another parent, another caregiver who is appreciative of our work to make the Science Museum a welcoming place," Paul said. "Everyone is eager for the program to continue to grow."

The Science Within Reach program provides approximately \$500,000 in accessibility programming annually. Generous supporters like Atlantic Union Bank; Richard S. Groover, PhD, and Patricia A. Jackson on behalf of The Virginia Academy of Science; and The Wilbur Moreland Havens Charitable Foundation, support a portion of this work, but gaps remain. Increased support will help ensure the Science Museum can continue to eliminate barriers to scientific discovery.

More than 82,000 guests joined the Science Museum last year on group visits.

Generational Curiosity

Lifelong learning is the key to adaptability and growth. That's why the Science Museum focuses on programming designed for specific age groups to reach a broader audience with content that speaks to the guest where they are in their learning journey.

Elementary Learners

"Do you offer any kind of field trip assistance? We want to book a field trip, but we can't pay the full cost." It's a common question asked as teachers book field trips to give students a chance to apply lessons learned in the classroom.

Field trips are a vital part of our programming for elementary learners. More than just a day

away from school, field trips are a chance to show students STEM in action and spark the curiosity that can make the impossible seem possible.

For under-resourced schools, the cost of field trips is prohibitive, and the availability of financial assistance determines if their students get the same opportunities as others when it comes to hands-on STEM learning. Supporters provide critical funding so the Science Museum can offer financial assistance to under-resourced schools. More than 82,000 guests joined the Science Museum last year on group visits, many during school field trips. Of those, over 11,000 were from schools that asked for assistance to make the visit possible. Philanthropy, including support from The Wilbur Moreland Havens Charitable Foundation, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, the Jane M. and John W. Roberts Scholarship Endowment Fund, and the Carol Young St. Clair Endowment, provided over \$125,000 to support young learners.



An estimated 89,000 under-resourced students live within an hour of the Science Museum, underscoring a need that surpasses current capacity. We've set a goal to raise enough funds to offer free field trips to all under-resourced schools within a one-hour radius of the Science Museum. Because no matter what school you teach in, all teachers (and students) should have the chance to experience a field trip that has them saying, as one middle school teacher put it, "The hands-on activities offered in various facets inspired and engaged our students who thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to build, create, listen, study and share throughout all levels of the museum."

Learning can't stop over the summer, and the Science Museum [summer camp](#) program has grown over the years to meet overwhelming demand. But similar to field trips, financial barriers can stand in the way of this pivotal elementary learning experience.

That's why the Science Museum introduced a summer camp [scholarship program](#), which invites Museums for All member families to apply for a free week of camp to help ensure that financial status doesn't stand in the way of summer discovery.

Rudio D'Eugenio, a parent of a summer camp scholarship recipient last summer, captured

the fundamental goal of the program: to plant the seeds of discovery. D'Eugenio said, "We wouldn't have done the program without the financial assistance. I have two children, we're a one-income family and we homeschool. So all the money has to be stretched out. So having a scholarship meant that she [her daughter] could do it ... Thank you. Your support is noticed and it means more than people can probably tell you. It means more than children can articulate right now. My daughter enjoyed her days at camp. She has no idea what seeds were sown. And she's not going to be able to identify or articulate that for decades to come."

During summer 2025, 540 camp experiences were offered over nine weeks of summer camp. Each week, 10 campers were offered 100% support through a camp scholarship. Fourteen generous supporters provided camp scholarships, but more donors are needed to help sustain and grow scholarship opportunities.

["After a rewarding career in science, I'm proud to sponsor students at the Science Museum's summer camp. Watching young minds ignite with wonder reminds me how a few days of hands-on exploration can spark confidence and show kids they have what it takes to become scientists and engineers," said Marie Colton, PhD, Founder of Hydros, LLC, and a Science Museum Volunteer.](#)



“As teens near decisions about careers or college, they’re looking for opportunities to build skills, gain experience and get a peek behind the curtain of potential careers.”

Teens

“If it wasn’t for *The Mix*, I’m not sure what I would be up to,” said one Mix teen. *The Mix* is a free, out-of-school program for 13- to 18-year-olds that offers teens a space to be themselves and create projects that inspire them.

Working with near-peer mentors, 530 teens from across Central Virginia explored cooking, movie makeup, stop-motion animation, computer science and more in 16 different workshops and events in *The Mix* last year.

“Teens aren’t as tricky as you think,” said Hannah McKalips, Mix and Youth Programs Coordinator. “The interest is there, but some need help to build their confidence to branch out and explore new things. We’ve found that when you mix one part creativity, one part independence and one part mentorship, teens thrive.”

The Mix currently offers after school, weekend and summer break hours, but the program is itching to grow as teens yearn for safe spaces to explore the world and build relationships.

To strengthen mentorship and workforce development for high school students, Volunteer and Internship Coordinator Jared Strawderman partnered with McKalips to launch the **Teen Leadership Program** last fall.



“As teens near decisions about careers or college, they’re looking for opportunities to build skills, gain experience and get a peek behind the curtain of potential careers,” said Strawderman. “At the same time, we were looking to bring stability to our teen volunteer program. In one year, we achieved both goals.”

The free Teen Leadership Program pairs teens together in a semester-long program that combines hands-on guest engagement with mentorship and learning opportunities. Participants have the chance to learn about roles throughout the Science Museum and perform those roles with increasing independence as they move through the program.

The experience has proven to be perspective changing. According to Divine, a Teen Leadership participant, “It’s grown my love for science and social interaction with people about science. I was always tunnel vision on an art career; now I’m more interested in going into a medical field.”

Two teen leadership cohorts last year were comprised of 35 students from 10 different schools who gave 2,100 hours of service. The program has already become highly sought after. The Science Museum received 24 applications for just eight open spots in seven days for the fall 2025 program!



Seniors



“It’s nice to see companies giving back to the community for programs that aren’t just for kids.”

What started out as a program to engage community members over 60 in STEM programming has become an opportunity for camaraderie, motivation and inspiration. As one participant put it, “I came to Senior Mornings not knowing anyone, and a year later, I have made new friends that I hang out with outside these events.”

Senior Mornings offers participants the chance to participate in bird watching on The Green, see far away galaxies in The Dome, or learn about native plants and pollinators with our horticulturalist. It didn’t take long for a dedicated following to emerge, and participants asked for more.

Thanks to continued support from Genworth, the Science Museum was able to expand its senior programming last year, increasing the number of programs from four to nine and introducing Senior Making events in *The Forge*. Over 200 seniors participated in free Senior Mornings and Senior Making events last year, enjoying activities ranging from creating wooden rings and stained glass art, to learning to code and discovering the biology of happiness.

“At Genworth and CareScout, we believe that growing older means finding new ways to learn, create and connect,” said Lewanda Sims-Gallimore, Senior Director, Genworth Community Involvement. “That’s why we’re proud to support senior programming at the Science Museum, where older adults can explore their curiosity, build new skills and thrive as lifelong learners.”

As we look to the future, we’re excited to build this community and, with expanded support, grow our offerings so more seniors can experience a sense of wonder and belonging.

“I’m new to the area, and Senior Mornings has allowed me to meet new people,” said Clara Heyder, Senior Mornings participant. “I like the variety of programming offered. They inspired me to join the Science Museum, especially the ones in the makerspace. I didn’t know you had that before the Senior Mornings program there. It’s nice to see companies giving back to the community for programs that aren’t just for kids.”



Environmental Sustainability

“We walk this route at least twice a day. We really love the grass, because everywhere else in Scott’s Addition is pavement.”

That’s what Ashleigh Anderson told the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* about what she and her dog, Harper, think about The Green.

The Science Museum’s 37-acre campus is prime real estate. But rather than allow development, the decision was made to convert over half of the campus into public greenspace. According to Chief Wonder Officer, Rich Conti, “The decision to invest in greening the neighborhood wasn’t about what was best for the Science Museum. It was what was best for the community.”

The Green was completed in 2024, funded by \$7.5M in private support. Converting the six acres of the Science Museum’s campus along Broad Street into urban greenspace has transformed the way the community uses the campus.



“What the Science Museum has done with The Green is pretty spectacular, and it raises the bar for what the city and developers need to do to make Broad Street the special street that it is,” said [Rob Estes, Green supporter](#).

Now a thriving community gathering place, The Green was the perfect place for us to celebrate International Day of Play with our grant partner, LEGO. The LEGO Foundation’s “Learning through Play” initiative supports programming and teacher workshops designed to utilize the power of play to drive scientific discovery. On International Day of Play, The Green was the prime spot to, as one participant put it, “bring everyone together, especially the kids and the community volunteers as well, in a great reminder to go outside and play.”



The LEGO Foundation’s “Learning through Play” initiative supports programming and teacher workshops designed to utilize the power of play to drive scientific discovery.



“The original, third phase of The Green stopped at DMV Drive, but after seeing the impact we’ve had on the community, we challenged ourselves to think bigger. Now we’re planning the East Green.”

“The original, third phase of The Green stopped at DMV Drive, but after seeing the impact we’ve had on the community, we challenged ourselves to think bigger,” Conti said. “Now we’re planning the East Green.”

The East Green will span 5 acres along DMV Drive, an area that currently comprises three surface parking lots. With an estimated budget of \$12M, which will be privately raised by the Foundation, the East Green is perhaps the most complex and transformational portion of the Science Museum’s campus greening plans.

Tyler Silvestro, Partner with Marvel Architects who is designing the East Green, told *Richmond BizSense*, “I believe this will be the park that all Richmonders go to. It will become a heavily used and friendly public space.”

The East Green will include thousands of biodiverse plantings; a vernal pond that captures and filters stormwater and supports native wildlife; paths, granite boulders and climbing features that encourage multigenerational play; bilingual interpretive signage; and more. While there is no formal completion date, construction on the early phases could begin in the next year, depending on project approvals and available funding.



Our commitment to investing in environmental sustainability has caught the attention of like-minded community partners. When Kelley McCall, Community Development Regional Manager at Meta, heard about the Science Museum's focus on environmental sustainability, she saw an opportunity. Becoming the Science Museum's first **Environmental Sustainer Partner** in April 2025 created the platform for Meta to give back and to be a conduit for improving the Richmond community.

"The Science Museum of Virginia is leading the way with innovative projects like their new greenhouse for sustainable horticulture, hands-on STEM workshops and enhanced Science on a Sphere programming," said McCall. "Meta is proud to support these initiatives as the Science Museum's first Environmental Sustainer Partner, helping to advance environmental stewardship, STEM education and community engagement across Virginia."

Meta's two-year gift will support programming designed to help Virginians reduce their impact on the environment, adopt more sustainable practices, and better understand energy and natural resource use.

As we continue to develop our environmental programming, we invite other partners to join Meta in helping create ways for science, sustainability and community to come together.



"Meta is proud to support these initiatives as the Science Museum's first Environmental Sustainer Partner, helping to advance environmental stewardship, STEM education and community engagement across Virginia."

Dinosaurs, Ducks and Decimals

Every year, the Science Museum offers a host of touring **exhibitions** and new features in **The Dome** that use popular topics and themes to connect STEM in entertaining ways. Last year, our touring exhibitions and giant screen films had something for everyone, from dinosaur devotees to architecture aficionados.



Touring Exhibitions

MathAlive! gave guests the chance to discover the fascinating ways math shapes music, sports, movies, games and more.

Towers of Tomorrow with LEGO® Bricks showcased 20 of the world's most iconic skyscrapers, built in stunning architectural detail, and encouraged guests to create their own design masterpieces.

Ultimate Dinosaurs highlighted the dinosaurs that evolved in isolation in the Southern Hemisphere.

Ultimate Dinosaurs was an ultimate hit, drawing more than 84,400 in attendance, the most successful summer exhibition in the Science Museum's history!



Giant Screen Films

In *Wings Over Water*, guests took a trip to the prairie wetlands to learn about the birds that migrate along these “flyways.”

In *Superhuman Body: World of Medical Marvels*, guests explored the inner workings of the most incredible machine in the world: the human body.

Dinosaurs of Antarctica brought prehistoric Antarctica to life, a world filled with strange dinosaurs and giant amphibians.



The Science Museum's Broad Street Station location is iconic and grand, but one location doesn't fulfill a statewide mission. Satellite locations and digital content allow the Science Museum's footprint to reach beyond Central Virginia.

Still benefiting from a \$9M refreshment of its core exhibits in 2020, the **Danville Science Center** has set visitation records for the last three fiscal years. Last year, the Science Center saw 60,813 in visitation, a 3 percent increase over the previous year. As an institution vital to the fabric of the close-knit community, the Science Center is the Dan River Region's educational and cultural anchor.



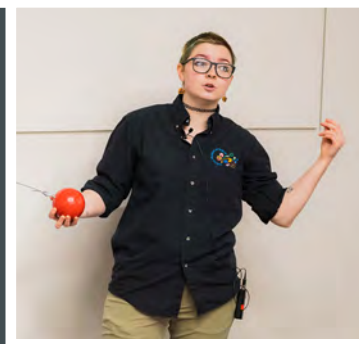
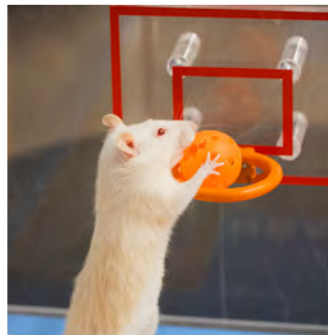
The largest project in the Science Museum's history broke ground in March 2025. The 69,000-square-foot **Northern Virginia Science Center**, slated to open in 2027, will be the second satellite location of the Science Museum and will be located in the Dulles area of Loudoun County. It will feature five expansive galleries with interactive exhibits to inspire guests of all ages; innovative educational facilities for hands-on programs, pop-up experiences and special events; and direct access to a 200-acre nature preserve.

Even with three physical locations, some Virginians may never be able to visit, so we invest in the creation of digital content to educate, enlighten and entertain through social media. From the genetics of sleep to comparing Taylor Swift's engagement ring to the rings in a 225-year-old Loblolly pine in the *Speed* exhibition, social media allows us to connect with the community in real-time with relatable and engaging content. And it works; last year our platforms received over 2.8 million impressions.



A Year of Impact

Last year, the Science Museum achieved a new record with 596,890 in visitation, surpassing last year's record visitation by 11 percent. But success isn't judged only by visitation. Other numbers demonstrate creativity, engagement and inspiration. In other words, impact.





- There is a Science Museum inside the Science Museum! The new LEGO replica of Broad Street Station, created by Ben Edlavitch from the show *LEGO Masters*, contains 33,850 bricks.
- More than 300 guests learned how to recognize AI art with our new artificial intelligence demo.
- Who needs the NBA? We played more than 300 games of Rat Basketball this year.
- Twelve species of plants were grown in our new hydroponic STEM garden in the Eco Lab.
- We joined over 350 other sites that participated in the Rubin First Look Watch Party to display never-before-seen images of space in The Dome.
- Over 500 guests learned how to make butter with the return of Countertop Chemistry demos in the Boost Kitchen.
- Four hundred and sixty volunteers provided 14,500 hours of their time to the Science Museum last year.
- The blog *When Does the Brain Eat Itself* went viral after being reshared, resulting in 24,364 views.



- A new demo for the 2024-25 school year, Phantastic Physics, debuted as the third most popular group demo offered, with 2,718 students learning about the laws of motion.
- One Moon Tree was planted in the TrainYard, a sweetgum whose seed was flown around the Moon on the Artemis mission and grown into a sapling by the USDA.
- Members of our community hosted 67 fundraisers/galas, 39 birthdays, 30 meetings, 22 weddings, 18 conferences, 15 vendor fairs and 2 festivals at the Science Museum.

FY25 Financial Review

Science Museum of Virginia Foundation, Inc.

Statement of Activities for the year ending June 30, 2025.
(Audited)

Revenues, Gains and Other Support

Annual giving	\$ 2,145,910
Endowment	151,622
In-kind contributions	3,643

Total Contributions	2,301,175
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Sponsorships	131,962
Membership, special events, and other	684,498
Investment income, net	776,358
Net realized and unrealized gains on investments	2,813,086

Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support	\$ 6,707,079
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Grants and Expenses

Grants to Science Museum of Virginia operations	\$ 1,000,945
Expenditures to or on behalf of the Science Museum	1,692,656
Indirect Science Museum support	133,509
Management and general	384,865
Fund-raising	736,395

Total Grants and Expenses	\$ 3,948,370
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Change in net assets	\$ 2,758,709
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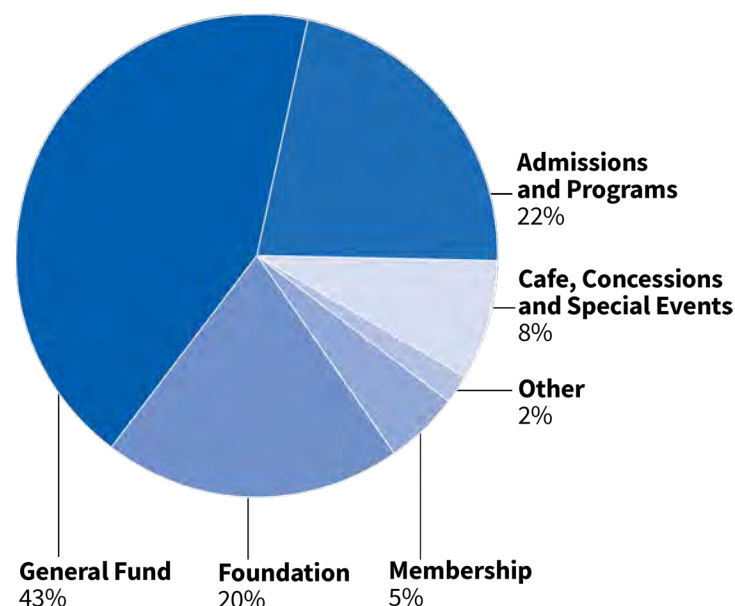
Net assets at beginning of year	30,628,042
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Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 33,386,751
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Science Museum of Virginia Financial Overview

Operating revenue from all sources for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2025.

Total revenue \$15,971,433



Volunteer Leadership

We are proud to recognize the dedicated individuals serving as our Trustees, Directors, Advisory Council members and Liaison Council members as of October 16, 2025. We are deeply grateful for their continued generosity in sharing their time and talents in support of the Science Museum.

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John Russell Pope Society

The John Russell Pope Society honors donors who have created a legacy gift to the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation. By including the Science Museum in their estate plans, these visionaries ensure the continuation of its mission for generations to come. Please consider joining those who are shaping the future of science education in Virginia by contacting the Foundation office at 804.864.1540 to learn how your legacy gift can help advance our future. Donors marked with an asterisk (*) are deceased.



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In Gratitude

We are deeply grateful to the individuals, foundations, organizations and corporations whose generous contributions during our past fiscal year (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025) empowered the Science Museum to deliver innovative programs and exhibitions that make science accessible, meaningful and fun for all. A plus sign (+) indicates these donors made their gifts through Component Funds or Supporting Organizations of the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond. Donors marked with an asterisk (*) are deceased.

Platinum Society

Recognizing gifts of \$20,000 or more

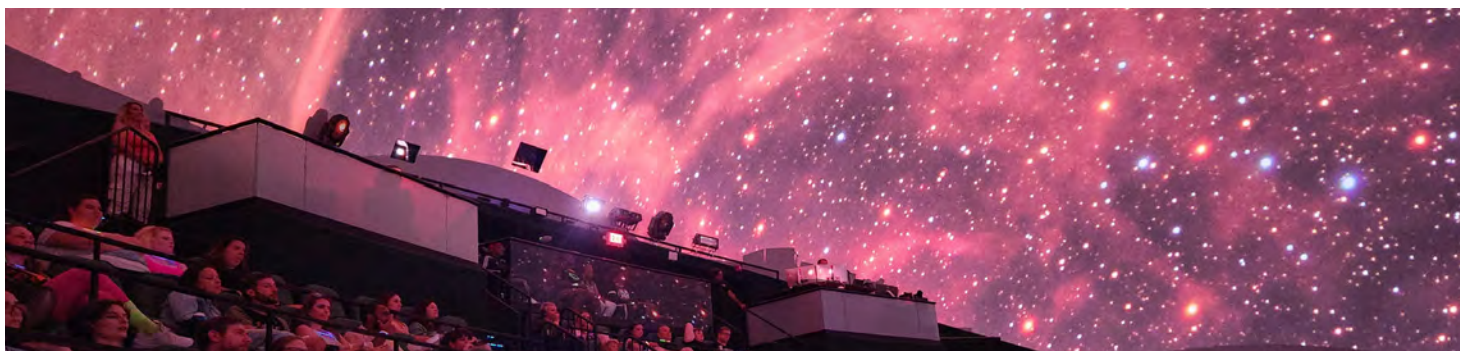
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