



*Connecting Children with the Natural World*

Hudson Highlands Nature Museum

## Annual Report 2023



Hello friends,

I have had the great privilege of being the Executive Director of the Nature Museum since early this year. It's a job I love and one I get to do with some of the brightest, most committed people I know, including Rob Lipkin, our Assistant Executive Director, an amazing leadership team, and teachers, educators, and support staff who regularly go above and beyond to provide meaningful nature education experiences for children and families. I am incredibly proud of all that we've accomplished, and I am very grateful to you for providing the support that makes our work possible.

As you read this Annual Report, which covers some of the highlights of 2023, please consider making an End of Year donation to help us continue to build on our current momentum. Your generosity will help us plan for and deliver programming in 2024 that reaches more children and families than ever before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica".

Jessica Oliveri  
Executive Director

## 2023: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Lots of exciting things happen at the Nature Museum every day. Some of them are small things, like when the Young Naturalists spot a heron at Goose Pond, when a woolly bear caterpillar is carried to safety by the Backpack Naturalists, or when someone catches sight of the resident bobcat at the Outdoor Discovery Center. Some of them are big things that impact every part of the organization. All of it is worth celebrating, but it's those bigger things that make up the following list of the Top 10 most exciting things to happen at HHNM in 2023.

**10.** For those of us who regularly visit the Outdoor Discovery Center, perhaps the most exciting thing to happen in 2023 was the repaving of Muser Drive. Last spring the potholes were so deep that after it rained snapping turtles would come to lay their eggs in them and ducklings would swim. Everyone was obeying the posted 15mph speed limit out of necessity – any faster would surely result in a blown tire or bent rim! Thanks to a grant from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, secured on our behalf by Senator James Skoufis, we were able to have the road redone. Now the wildlife is back in the ponds where they belong and it's smooth sailing from the gate to the bottom of the road. {Please note: The posted speed limit is still 15mph. Maybe you don't *have to* go that speed anymore, but for everyone's safety, you absolutely still should.}



**9.** We welcomed a new Animal Ambassador to our collection. Archie, a Barred Owl, was rehabilitated after a car strike but isn't releasable back into the wild. Although he's unable to fly, he's healthy and quite mobile. Once he's settled in and the staff has received training in his care and handling, he'll become an education animal and will be used for programming. In the coming months we'll welcome a red-tailed hawk to our flock, as well.



**8.** The Nature Museum has always had an active and supportive board, but in recent years it had shrunk to its smallest size in recent memory with only 13 members. This year, we built that number up to 19 and there are currently two new candidates ready to sign on in the new year.

**7.** Volunteers provided 911 hours of time to Nature Museum projects including everything from trail maintenance to greeting visitors at the Wildlife Education Center to working on renovation projects. Volunteer hours free up staff time and allow us to accomplish things we'd never be able to do on our own. If you would like to get more involved, please visit <https://www.hhnm.org/volunteer> to fill out an interest form.

**6.** We opened a new campus at Mountain Lake Park in Warwick, where we're currently offering a preschool class and the popular Knee-High Naturalist program. In the coming year we hope to expand to include additional programming for older children and weekend programs for families. We are very grateful to have entered into a partnership with Guidecraft which lead to a donation of more than \$60,000 in furniture, toys, and other supplies to outfit the new classrooms.





**5.** Our programming in Newburgh continues to grow. In addition to offering Knee High Naturalist at the library, we ran a full year of Saturday morning programming at the Newburgh Armory Unity Center. We're also working with the Desmond Center to provide nature education programs for adults and seniors, and we've created partnerships with both the Environmental Justice Fellows and the Newburgh Parks Conservancy. We are very grateful to the Kaplan Family Foundation for providing funding that makes those programs possible and look forward to continuing to expand our offerings in Newburgh.

**4.** At home in Cornwall and Cornwall on Hudson, our programs are thriving. In 2023, Summer Camp had its biggest year yet and, in

spite of the option of free universal preK available through the school district, people continue to choose our wonderful Young Naturalist program for its unique perspective and focus on time spent in nature. We have 116 students this year. Likewise, our home school program, weekend nature programs and special events continue to fill up and often sell out. 2023 saw the return of our Earth Day Celebration and the launch of a number of brand-new weekend programs.

**3.** This year we welcomed 15,000 children and families to the Nature Museum.

**2.** In 2023 we completed the renovation of the Joseph F Maloney Hall of Animals, and it is beautiful. If you haven't seen it yet, I encourage you to stop by for a visit. The room is bright and open and the new layout creates teaching opportunities that we simply did not have before. Our Animal Ambassadors are living in new, better enclosures, necessary updates have been made to the HVAC and other crucial systems, and our staff has more time than ever to focus on providing enrichment opportunities for the animals.



**1.** This year we settled on a new name and logo for the organization. Beginning in January, we will become the Hudson Highlands Nature Center. The new name and logo (pictured left) will help people better understand who we are and what we do.

All donors to the Year End Appeal will receive a logo magnet (while supplies last) and those who donate \$1000 or more will receive a baseball cap.

It's been quite a year. As we wrap up 2023, we're looking forward to 2024 with energy and excitement, with lots of ideas about ways to continue to connect children with nature through education and play.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for your generous support of nature education and play at the Nature Museum. Your donations make possible an array of hands-on, experiential education programs that help children and their families establish a meaningful connection to the natural world.

The shortened format of this year's Annual Report means we are unable to list our many members and supporters. Please visit our website to view the complete list.



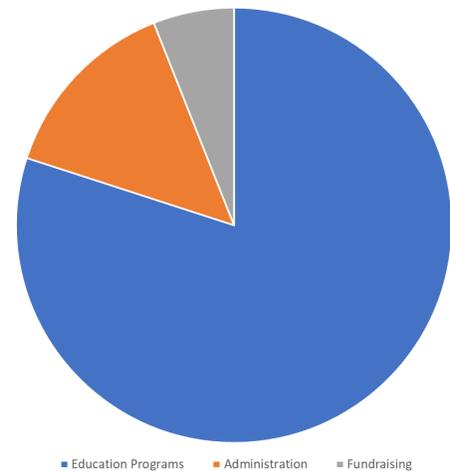
## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The information shown below reflects Fiscal Year 2022, which ran from March 1, 2022-December 31, 2022

### Operating Expenses

Education Program Costs	\$799,439
Administration	\$142,872
Fundraising	\$52,657
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$995,968</b>

### Operating Expenses



### Operating Revenue

Admissions/Sales/Program Fees	\$598,082
Fundraising Events	\$140,017
Grants & Corporate Sponsorships	\$49,157
Membership Donations	\$71,577
Other Donations	\$46,264
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$994,968</b>

### Operating Revenue

