

REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY

sense
THE PLACE

September 1, 2018–August 31, 2019



NATURE CENTER
AT SHAKER LAKES

Conserve. Connect. Inspire.





Dear Friends,

Another year has passed, and it has been as busy and as exciting, perhaps even more so, than the last. Our twenty acres have been buzzing with renovation, restoration, and reconstruction, yet through the commotion we realize a larger vision is coming to life. Together with our Board of Trustees, we remain committed to the end result of a fully restored and reinvigorated outdoor classroom. As we continue to take this vision to a broader audience and seek philanthropic support, stay on the lookout for more information about the vision and goals of our campaign—Enhancing Your Outdoor Classroom: Campaign for the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

In April, we broke ground on the construction of the brand new ADA—accessible All People’s Trail. The new design of this iconic trail, which has provided access to nature for so many since 1983, will allow us to better connect and interact with larger school groups and classes and bring more engaging programs to the Nature Center. This one-of-a-kind trail and all of its new features will allow people of all abilities to enjoy nature in new, sensory-friendly ways.

Through the reconstruction of the All People’s Trail, we continued to welcome the community and provide high quality environmental educational programs to nearly 14,000 children. An astounding 65% of these children come from economically disadvantaged families. Our hope is that after each field experience, students will tell their families that they can come back to the Nature Center free of cost and share what they learned from our naturalists on the trails.

While we aggressively pursued our vision for improving our outdoor classroom, we successfully engaged over 40,000 visitors through free, nature-based recreation, field experiences, spring break and summer camps, family and adult programs, and birthday parties and rentals. We strengthened partnerships with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Cleveland Heights-University Heights and Shaker Heights Schools Districts, the Greater Cleveland Head Start Program and others to provide continued field excursions at the Nature Center, environmental educators in classrooms, and professional development training for teachers. We launched new initiatives, such as an Educator-in-Residence Program at the Stonebrook Montessori School in Cleveland, and a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative designed to help the Nature Center create a more equitable and inclusive working and learning environment.

Our visitors often share and describe a feeling they experience each time they visit the Nature Center. They articulate feelings of peace, purpose, and intention. A visit invigorates the senses in ways that are becoming more difficult to find in our modern world. It is **hearing** the excited laughter from school groups after rolling a log and **seeing** a salamander for the first time. It is **feeling** serenity on our Stearns Trail after a busy week. It is the woodsy **smell** of fresh dirt after a rain shower. It is sharing a memorable moment with a loved one. It is simply **being**—on our planet, in our community—and knowing we belong here. It is this activation of our senses and connection to the larger natural world that gives us a strong **sense of place** and is why the Nature Center holds such special meaning to so many in our region. This is what motivates us to work steadfastly and with our own purpose to further our mission and reach.

We invite you to share in this journey as we celebrate the achievements of the past year: open your senses through the photography that captures our beauty and purpose, let the words inspire you to find your place, and share in our excitement for all that we have accomplished together in such a short time. SENSE THE PLACE.

Lastly, we would be remiss if we did not simply say THANK YOU! It is because of you and your support that we are able to enjoy and be continuously inspired by nature’s beauty at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. As a collective voice from all of us at the Nature Center, thank you for another memorable year. We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

With appreciation and warm regards,

Kay Carlson

Kay Carlson
PRESIDENT & CEO

James Dixon

James Dixon
CHAIR,
BOARD OF TRUSTEES



A P L A C E O F

wilderness

IN AN URBAN SETTING



More than half of the world’s population now lives in an urban area. Many of those urban areas are devoid of greenspace, leaving those of us living the urban lifestyle often feeling disconnected from nature. Recent research has confirmed that being more removed from nature is having a profound effect on our physical and mental health.

A study from Stanford University¹ found that people who walked for 90 minutes in a natural area, as opposed to people who walked in a high-traffic urban setting, showed decreased activity in a region of the brain associated with depression. Being disconnected from nature has also been shown to result in higher levels of anxiety. The study concluded that city dwellers have a 20 percent higher risk of anxiety disorders and a 40 percent higher risk of mood disorders as compared to people in rural areas.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is one of the few Nature Centers in the country that is located in an urban area, offering the ease of nature

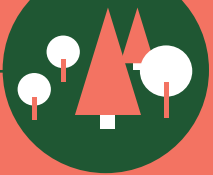
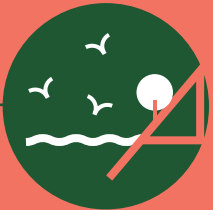


access to so many in our region. Neighbors note the expansive greenspace of the Nature Center and the surrounding Shaker Parklands as key factors in choosing to live in this area.

Our proximity to the city of Cleveland is what helps make our unique Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) program a reality for children attending the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. This early exposure to the natural environment is so critical for learning, but we know it will also have a profound effect on each visiting student’s physical and mental well-being into their adult lives.

As has been true for the last 53 years, our mission of connecting people to nature and inspiring environmental stewardship continues. Certainly, our location—**this place**—plays a critical role in fulfilling that mission. We truly are a little piece of wilderness tucked into our region’s urban landscape.

1. <https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2015/06/23/1510459112>

OUR PLACE

20		80,000+	
preserved acres of land		unique footprints on our trails	
8		1	
northeast Ohio native habitats		brand new All People's Trail boardwalk	
2		UNLIMITED	
miles of trails to explore		opportunities to discover nature	
16,819			
people impacted through environmental education			

“if facts are the seeds that
later produce knowledge
and wisdom, then the emotions
of the senses are fertile soil
in which the seeds must grow

RACHEL CARSON



“
the
Nature Center
at Shaker Lakes
is a wonderful
place to breathe
and enjoy
nature

”
BOBBI KATZ
SHAKER HEIGHTS RESIDENT



ESTABLISHING MEANING THROUGH

sense AND PURPOSE THROUGH place



Each visit to the Nature Center can produce a unique experience that is all its own. The sights, smells, sounds, and textures we experience change each day and throughout each season of the year. The memories made with loved ones become imprinted in our minds in special and distinctive ways. Yet through each moment spent here, there is something that always stays the same and connects each of those memories, emotions, and feelings. Throughout the course of our life, it is often a place, or environment, that can have a profound effect on who we are as people.

Take a moment and think back to places that were important to you as a child. Did you have a favorite tree to climb? Perhaps a favorite stream that you loved to explore? Research suggests that, among other important benefits, people that develop a strong sense of place may be more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors¹. Creating a sense of place in nature from a very young age helps children grow up to be better stewards of the environment, and as a result, they will be more likely to protect our environment and its biodiversity for future generations.

Through the last year, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes has deepened its commitment to not only environmental education, but also to conserving our natural areas and enhancing and restoring your outdoor classroom. Through renovation and restoration, each new feature and detail of our comprehensive plan will play a role in expanding our offerings to the community, deepening the experiences that happen along our trails and habitats, and sustaining the unique ways that allow our visitors to SENSE THIS PLACE.

We know that helping each visitor to connect their senses and moments to a larger experience throughout our preserved habitats—establishing a sense of place—is critical in fulfilling our mission to the community. Each time a visitor hears a native songbird, feels the dirt crunching under their shoes, holds an earthworm, touches tree bark, or smells spicebush leaves, it invigorates their senses and imprints new memories that connect to these 20 acres at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes—and that is extremely meaningful.

¹ Wilson, R. Early Childhood Educ J (1997) 24: 191.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02353278>

<https://naaee.org/eepr/research/library/sense-place-environmental-education>
Wilson, R. Early Childhood Educ J (1997) 24: 191.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02353278>

<https://www.playfullearning.net/resource/developing-sense-place/>



STEVE KUSHNICK

Nature Center staff and visitors can't wait for Friday to come, when they know Steve will be reporting for his weekly shift as a Welcome Desk Volunteer! Dubbed the "fun one," Steve's smile and energy light up the office in his role at the Welcome Desk, where he greets visitors and shares information about our trails and northeast Ohio native habitats.

After 18 months with the Nature Center, there is no question about the impact he has made with the organization. Steve embodies every aspect of a model volunteer: he is friendly, well-rounded and accepts all projects no matter what they involve—always with a smile that is extremely contagious.

Our volunteer program is an essential part of our daily operations at the Nature Center, and having Steve on our team in this role ensures visitors are engaged and leave feeling happy and inspired by nature! Children love interacting with Steve, as he enjoys handing out stickers and scavenger hunts to connect them to nature and all that the Nature Center has to offer.

Staff in our Education Department know they can count on Steve for help assisting with filing, organizing colored pencils and beads, cutting out paper for crafts, or any other special projects that he can do while at the Welcome Desk. Steve is also our "go-to" volunteer whenever event assistance is needed at the archery station.

Steve is a retired psychologist and long-time Shaker Heights resident. He has three grown children and six grandkids and enjoys spending time with his family.

If you are inspired to volunteer in any capacity, please visit our website at shakerlakes.org/volunteer to see our available opportunities.

THE VALUE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS:

FY2019

568 *volunteers*

contributed their time, skills and energy



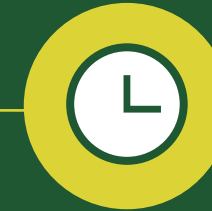
330.5 *volunteer hours*

contributed by our Board of Trustees



7,838 *cumulative hours*

logged by volunteers—that is the equivalent of 4 full time staff!



742 *hours*

donated by our top group:
Ruffing Montessori



143 *NEW volunteers*

joined the Nature Center



\$191,792

worth of time given by our volunteers

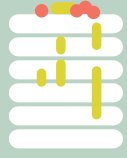


Our successes throughout the last year are made possible through our robust volunteer program and each person who contributed their time, skills and energy to our mission.
THANK YOU for a great year!



1,507,440
STEPS

TAKEN BY PARTICIPANTS ON HIKE, RUN & FUN



945

PANCAKES

FLIPPED AT
PANCAKE BREAKFAST
FOR THE BIRDS

610



HOMEGROWN
PLANTS OFFERED
AT THE
37TH ANNUAL
PLANT SALE

6,084

LBS

OF **COMPOST** GENERATED FROM
THE NEW COMPOSTING PROGRAM WITH
RUST BELT RIDERS



6084
LBS



900+
HOURS

OF
TECHNOLOGY-
FREE TIME
DURING
**SUMMER
OUTDOOR
CAMP**

DURING **OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CAMP**,
THIS SUMMER BROUGHT TO ME:

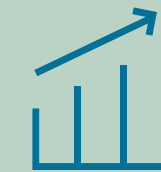
- 12 million memories •
- 11 bottles of bug spray •
- 10 changes of clothes •
- 9 weeks of discovery •
- 8 tadpoles raised •
- 7 camp counselors •
- 6 walkie talkies •
- 5 different age groups •
- 4 habitats explored •
- 3 days of rock climbing •
- 2 tired feet •
- 1 successful carline •



1,600

SETS OF
1ST GRADE EYES
LOOKED THROUGH
BINOCULARS

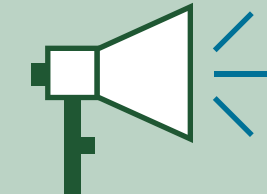
185%



GROWTH IN
**SOCIAL MEDIA
REACH**

51

EARNED
MEDIA MENTIONS



883

NATURE
CENTER
MEMBERS
CONTRIBUTED
TO OUR MISSION

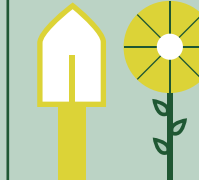


187

DELIVERIES MADE FOR
PLANT SALE PRE-ORDERS

400+ POUNDS

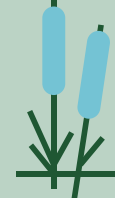
OF **WASTE** COMPOSTED AND
DIVERTED FROM LANDFILLS
AT FLYWAYS NOT HIGHWAYS



400+ NATIVE
PERENNIALS, TREES, AND
SHRUBS PLANTED

500 INVASIVE

CATTAILS PULLED



\$1.1M RAISED

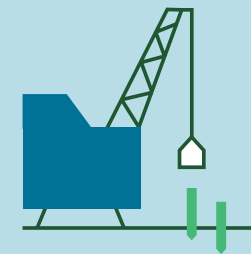
IN **CONTRIBUTED
INCOME** TO SUPPORT
OUR **OPERATIONS**

TICKET TICKET TICKET

\$319,539

GENERATED FROM OUR FUNDRAISING EVENTS
(FLYWAYS NOT HIGHWAYS, ANNUAL PLANT SALE,
AND HIKE, RUN & FUN)

THE NEW ALL PEOPLE'S TRAIL:



366 PILES

INSTALLED TO BUILD THE
NEW
ALL PEOPLE'S TRAIL



AVERAGE DEPTH
OF EACH PILE TO
REACH BEDROCK:

9 FEET



CONSTRUCTION & CAMPAIGN

50,000+
STAINLESS STEEL SCREWS

INSTALLED TO COMPLETE THE **NEW ALL PEOPLE'S TRAIL**



REALIZED A
\$30K

OPERATIONS BUDGET SURPLUS
(unaudited)



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Jill Anderson, Visitor & Administrative Services Manager
Shelly Bender, Part-time Environmental Educator
Kim Bihler, Events Manager
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Mary Jo Ciuni, Part-time Environmental Educator
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Caitlin Connick, Environmental Educator/Program Specialist
Carl Friess, Welcome Desk Associate
Lisa Golba, Early Childhood Environmental Educator
Ashley Hall, Marketing Coordinator
Christopher Hall, Director of Finance & Administration
Michelle Hall, Bookkeeper
Katrina Heinzen, Part-time Environmental Educator
Nicole Hindman, Welcome Desk Associate/Environmental Educator
Thomas Hornberger, Facilities Director
Charles McShane, Welcome Desk Associate
Nick Mikash, Natural Resources Specialist
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Rosalind Soltow, Development Associate
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*AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2019

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*AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2019

VOLUNTEERS

We are thankful to those who have spent
their time and energy to further our mission.
Thank you to our many volunteers!

200+ HOURS

Ruffing Montessori
Charles M. Stephenson

150-199 HOURS

Margaret Poutasse
Norma Storer

100-149 HOURS

Jane Donnell
Camryn Koonce
Helena Souffrant
Meredith Sundahl
Brianna Williams

40-99 HOURS

Paul Anderson
Michelle Anselmo
Karen Ault
Owen Barnard
Joseph Berenholz
Dylan Berr
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Lily Brown
Quinn Bruening-Wright
Margo Burke
Anna Carpenter
David Carpenter
Erin Connell
Justin Croniser
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Jim Dixon
Akiva Ehrenreich
Grace Fraser
Lisa Gannon
Gross Schechter School
Henry Harte
Graham Hearn

Kelsey Hearn
Adam Holbrook
Kate Jaycox
John Carroll University Softball Team
CJ Keyes
Seema Khatri
Sonali Khatri
Mary Jane Krivanka
Stephen Kushnick
Erik Maier
Grace Meyer
JJ Michelow
Eva Nieman
Cindy Oakley
Dick Obermanns
PEP

Andre Poggio
Teddy Prokvolit
Scout Troop 662
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Naomi Shroge
Mitchell Stiefel
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Evan Warner
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Benjamin Witt
Linda Yanega

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Thank you for your generous gift!

INDIVIDUALS

\$10,000+
Anonymous Donor

\$5,000-\$9,999

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THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION

The Cleveland Foundation has been a longstanding supporter of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, helping us launch some of our most impactful educational programs, including the Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) Program with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Over the last six years, the Cleveland Foundation's gifts have helped us bring over 30,000 students to the Nature Center for hands-on natural science programming.

This year, the Cleveland Foundation made a major investment in the future of the Nature Center's programming by contributing a lead gift to our Campaign to Enhance Your Outdoor Classroom. Thanks to their generosity, the newly reconstructed All People's Trail includes expanded educational features and a new, fully accessible community entrance along North Woodland Road.

The Cleveland Foundation North Woodland Trailhead will connect the Nature Center to the larger Shaker Parklands and the regional Lake to Lakes Trail system, which follows the path of Doan Brook from the Shaker Lakes to Lake Erie and the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve. Two trailheads with a bike rack and wayfinding signage will help guide visitors to a new ADA-accessible ramp leading down to the All People's Trail boardwalk, which is the centerpiece of our educational programming.

The Cleveland Foundation's grant for the All People's Trail and the North Woodland Trailhead is one of the largest gifts that the Nature Center has received to date towards its capital campaign. The Cleveland Foundation's gift will make the Nature Center more accessible to the entire community and help us better serve the thousands of students who visit the Nature Center each year.

"With this latest gift to the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, we continue the Cleveland Foundation's commitment to making parks and greenspaces across our community more accessible to all members of the public," said Stephen Love, Cleveland Foundation Program Officer for the Environment. "Spending time in nature is known to improve mental and physical health for all ages, but particularly for children. The new All People's Trail will create opportunities for more students to participate in outdoor education programs and enhance community access into one of Greater Cleveland's last remaining wetland habitats for years to come."

We are truly grateful for the support of the Cleveland Foundation.



ENHANCING YOUR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

CAMPAIGN *for*
THE NATURE CENTER
at SHAKER LAKES

THE EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING!

Our multi-year vision to enhance your outdoor classroom is underway. This fiscal year kicked off the second and largest phase of our vision: reconstructing and enhancing the iconic All People's Trail. This trail has been an essential tool that brings nature to life for the thousands of students and visitors we serve each year.

With 100% board commitment and the support of so many in the region, our team committed to bring a reimagined All People's Trail to life. Upon the completion of the All People's Trail, we are excited to turn our focus to the Stearns Woodland Trail.

We invite you to join us and share in our vision to make the Nature Center and your outdoor classroom more engaging, more sustainable, and more accessible to the entire region for generations to come!

Contact Kay Carlson, President & CEO at 216.321.5935 ext. 227 or carlson@shakerlakes.org for more information about how you can have an impact on building the future of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

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*SEPTEMBER 1, 2018–AUGUST 31, 2019

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes extends its deepest appreciation to the many donors, members, and institutional supporters whose generous contributions helped ensure a successful year.

*We apologize for any omissions. If your name has been omitted or listed incorrectly, please contact Patty Albrecht at 216.321.5935 ext. 232 or albrecht@shakerlakes.org.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

FY 2019

(Unaudited)

REVENUE CONTRIBUTED

- GOVERNMENT FUNDING
\$72,530.00
- ENDOWMENT (DISTRIBUTION)
\$98,856.00
- INDIVIDUAL DONORS
\$176,372.55
- EVENTS
(Net of COG-Plant Sale/Art on View)
\$287,013.72
- CORPORATIONS/FOUNDATIONS
\$454,628.83

REVENUE EARNED

- FACILITY RENTALS & MERCHANDISE (NET)
\$32,653.45
- PROGRAM FEES
\$234,798.39

TOTAL REVENUE = \$1, 356, 852.94

EXPENSES

- EDUCATION & OUTREACH
\$613,347.86
- FACILITIES & LAND MANAGEMENT
\$251,108.90
- FUNDRAISING
\$224,676.38
- MANAGEMENT & GENERAL
\$145,378.84
- MARKETING
\$92,513.80

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$1,327,025.78

NET OPERATING REVENUE**

\$29,827.16

**EXCLUDES DEPRECIATION AND OTHER ADJUSTING ENTRIES.

WAYS TO GIVE

• MEMBERSHIP •

Become a member by giving a gift at one of our six levels ranging from \$50–\$1,000+. Each membership has progressive benefits, including early and discounted program registration rates and 10% off our Duck Pond Gift Shop.

• ANNUAL FUND •

This annual campaign is a year-round effort to raise funds necessary to support the daily operations of our organization, including the maintenance of our trails and facilities. Gifts of any size are appreciated and are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

• THE HERON SOCIETY •

The Heron Society recognizes our dedicated donors who give \$1,000 or more, annually. In addition to a host of membership benefits, Heron Society patrons enjoy access to exclusive events and behind-the-scenes opportunities.

• TRIBUTE GIFTS •

Make a gift to the Nature Center in memory or celebration of someone special. We have many opportunities to make a tribute gift, including our Legacy Pathway program.

• THE EVERGREEN SOCIETY •

Membership is open to anyone who invests in the future of the Nature Center through a planned gift. Individuals may designate gifts for a specific purpose or offer broad support through a gift to the Endowment Foundation.

• ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION •

Early supporters of the Nature Center had the foresight to create the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center Endowment Foundation to establish consistent funding and long-term security for our future. Donations to the Endowment Foundation remain a living legacy, ensuring that the Nature Center will exist in perpetuity.

• IRAs AND DONOR ADVISED FUNDS •

Contributions can be made in the form of a gift of appreciated assets such as IRAs, stock, or securities.



PLEASE CONTACT US
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RANGE OF GIVING OPTIONS

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DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
216.321.5935 ext. 223
sikora@shakerlakes.org

Patty Albrecht

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216.321.5935 ext. 232
albrecht@shakerlakes.org

2600 South Park Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44120

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The Nature Center is and will always be a transparent organization that is thankful for the gifts our community members bestow upon us to further our mission. Because we receive no property or income tax, your gift is vital and will ensure that we remain free and open to the public, connecting future generations to nature.



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