REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

September 1, 2017–August 31, 2018

NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES
Conserve. Connect. Inspire.
DEAR FRIENDS,

CONSERVE. CONNECT. INSPIRE. These three little words carry great meaning for us. More than 50 years ago, members of our community came together to save this space, using those three words as guiding principles. Generations later, we carry forward their legacy by continuing to conserve these 20 acres, connect people to nature and inspire environmental stewardship.

At the Nature Center, we strive to grow and improve with each year, taking feedback from our community to enhance our programming, restore and maintain our land and find new ways to help others deeper their connection to the natural world.

This past year, we launched registration for our Summer Outdoor Adventure Camp early, for the first time, to give our members advanced access to their favorite sessions. We provided more hands-on workshops to expand the capabilities for people to make an impact in their own backyards. Our vision of creating demonstration gardens for public education came to fruition, with more native plants growing in these areas than ever before. In its fifth year, our Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) program saw an increase of 1,500 students when compared to the year before. This place-based learning program for students of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District has allowed children to explore the wonderment of nature, for many of them have little interaction with the natural world in their daily lives.

The advancements made this past year are all part of our long-term plan. Embarking on a bold vision for the future, we worked diligently to raise additional dollars needed to support a more comprehensive plan to restore and enhance your outdoor classroom. The first visible evidence of this plan was the construction of the Lavelle Family Amphitheater.

Located directly behind the Visitor’s Center, we reimagined what an outdoor auditorium could look like. Enhanced with locally sourced materials, we designed this space with education in mind, installing permeable pavers as a solution to challenges imposed by the weather but to also provide our educators with a tool when teaching children about stormwater runoff and soil erosion.

We hope this detailed report on our most recent year will show you where we have been, but more importantly, give you a glimpse of where we are headed. As our journey into a new year, we have our eyes set on the future—full of promise and progress. The seeds planted over the last few years are beginning to sprout, and we hope you are as excited as we are to watch them grow.

We are grateful for our community, for your continued support has allowed for us to care for this extraordinary place.

With deep appreciation and warm regards,

KAY CARLSON
President & CEO

INSPIRING STEWARDSHIP

The value that volunteers bring to our organization cannot be underestimated. Without the generosity of dedicated community members, we would not be able to accomplish all that we do. We’re so thankful to those who give their time, skills and energy towards our mission.

| 2,601  | HOURS GIVEN BY VOLUNTEERS |
| 610    | VOLUNTEERS |
| 194    | HOURS DONATED BY OUR TOP INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS |
We are pleased to acknowledge Norma Storer as this year’s Volunteer of the Year! Recognized for her hard-work, dedication and friendly demeanor, Norma has been an active volunteer with the Nature Center since 2016. Her connection to the Nature Center is a deep and personal one that grew from pure happenstance.

Before Norma and her husband moved to Shaker Heights from Pennsylvania, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. While in recovery, she found solace in nature. Her friends would take turns on 30-minute walks with her in her favorite nearby park, searching for herons to take her mind off her illness. It was one of Norma’s favorite things to do—bringing her comfort and hope during her time of need.

After the move, Norma was unpacking boxes and feeling overwhelmed by being in a new place, with none of the familiarities of her past. Still in recovery, she went for a walk to clear her mind and “stumbled” across the Nature Center. Upon entering, she looked up and saw a heron—her beacon of hope. Whether it was a sign from above, or what she notes as “moments of mysterious intrusion,” she knew then, that everything was going to be okay.

From that moment forward, the now-retired nurse of 52 years and breast cancer survivor lends her time to us weekly, serving as a Welcome Desk volunteer assisting visitors and staff.
I really value the nature center as a little piece of wilderness in the middle of the noise and hubbub of urban living. Half the enjoyment I get is seeing the wonder and happiness of the children who visit when I am there.”

Visitor
We have the privilege of teaching people of all ages about our natural world, building the foundation for lifelong connections to the outdoors. Rooted in providing hands-on field experiences, our applauded Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) program with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District aims to teach students in an urban setting about the importance of the environment.
Through our programs with area schools, we have provided educational experiences to thousands of students over the past year, many of whom have little interaction with nature in their daily lives.

We serve students like Jada, a Cleveland first grader, who walked off the bus and onto the Nature Center property, quiet and unsure. As she glanced around her, her face lit up with each step into the woods and each discovery on the trail.

Throughout her field experience, Jada opened up, peering through a magnifying glass and asking inquisitive questions while getting her hands messy studying the soil. When it was time for her class to get on the bus, she said, with broad smile and joy in her voice, “I HAD NO IDEA HOW MUCH LIVES IN OUR DIRT. IT’S SO COOL!”

Because of our dedicated environmental educators, and support from our community to fund our programs, we’re able to make a difference in the lives of students, opening new doors of possibilities for them.
**2018 A YEAR IN REVIEW**

**CONSERVATION**
- 6,000 LBS of waste diverted from landfills
- 780 LBS of organic waste was composted on-site and used as soil to grow native plants
- 610 volunteers
- 819 new individuals joined us for programming
- 26 family and adult programs were offered
- 300 crows consumed on Family Campfire Night
- 819 new individuals joined us for programming
- 26 family and adult programs were offered
- 300 crows consumed on Family Campfire Night
- 1 split rail fence installed by Eagle Scout Troup 662 to increase safety

**SUMMER OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CAMP**
- 524 spots filled
- 30 field trips around Northeast Ohio
- 6 camp scholarships awarded
- 4 inventions were created by our young environmental scientists
- 1,473,120 feet while out exploring on a total of 340 hikes
- 523 native plants offered
- 610 volunteers

**FLYWAYS NOT HIGHWAYS**
- $212,462 generated revenue from the Annual Plant Sale
- $188,409 worth of time in the past year
- 6 creative culinary experts delighted our guests taste buds
- 610 volunteers

**ANNUAL PLANT SALE**
- 55 native plants offered
- 425 students observed and recorded bird banding
- 18,024 birds banded to-date
- 6 creative culinary experts delighted our guests taste buds
- 610 volunteers

**HIKE, RUN & EXPLORE**
- 450 ARROWS soared through the air during archery
- 420 RUNNERS crossed the finish line
- 100 TREE CLIMBERS
- 360 native plants donated and sold
- 925 students sampled macro-invertebrates
- 167 state member families gave over $18,000
- 197 member families have given consecutively for the past 20 years
- 309,000 earned impressions on Facebook
- 187,522 earned impressions on Facebook
- 101 participants on Family Head Start Day participated in a family hike
- 324 feather experiences conducted to learn how birds stay warm

**WE SAVED**
- 40+ TREES
- 1,800 gallons of water by recycling 225 tons of paper, plastic, and aluminum
- 670 PLASTIC BOTTLES
- 606 volunteer time
Over the past 52 years, we’ve had the pleasure of witnessing generations of families shaping the future of this treasured space. Passed down from parents to their children, a strong tradition of involvement to help us protect and preserve this vital green space has made a tremendous impact on the long-term sustainability of the Nature Center.

One family in particular has had a remarkable history of involvement with the Nature Center. For more than 45 years, and the Lavelle family has actively supported our mission, through a variety of means. It all began in 1970 when Nancy Lavelle found herself preparing appetizers for a fundraiser to support the newly established Nature Center. What began as a small gesture has grown into nearly five decades of service. Nancy, with the support of her husband Neal, would go on to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Nature Center from 1974 through 1993. Neal’s sister, Kathy Heffernan, served as President of the Nature Center Board from 2003–2005, encouraging younger members of the family to become involved.

After spending his childhood days on these very grounds, Nancy’s son, David Lavelle, followed in his mother’s footsteps, becoming a board member in 2006. David and his wife Ann would eventually bring their three children to the Nature Center, enrolling them in our summer camps and attending many of our programs.

The three generations of the Lavelle family have supported the Nature Center in a multitude of ways, including the funding of a recent enhancement to our outdoor classroom. In honor of their loyal service throughout the years, this new space was dedicated as ‘The Lavelle Family Amphitheater’ which greatly expanded our abilities to teach outdoors, surrounded by nature.
WAYS TO GIVE

Because we receive no property or income tax, we rely solely on the generous contributions of individuals, members, foundations and corporations to deliver our mission. Your gift is vital and will ensure that we remain open and free to the public, connecting future generations to nature.

MEMBERSHIP  Become a member by giving a gift at one of our six levels ranging from $50–1000+. Each membership has progressive benefits, including early and discounted 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 facility. 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 sustainable Tribute Tree 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 are strategically invested by its Board, which allocates annually a percentage of the revenue from those investments to the Nature Center for daily operations, guaranteeing a source of income each year. Generally, bequests, memorial donations, and other designated gifts are placed in the Endowment Foundation. Donations to the Endowment Foundation remain a living legacy, ensuring that the Nature Center will exist into perpetuity.
The Nature Center is and will always be a transparent organization that is thankful for the gifts our community members bestow upon us in order to further our mission. We are pleased to share that our organization has been awarded the top 4-star rating by Charity Navigator for our commitment to fiscal responsibility and healthy governance.

ROBERT SIKORA
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
216.321.5935, ext. 223
sikora@shakerlakes.org

PATTY ALBRECHT
MEMBERSHIP AND ANNUAL FUND MANAGER
216.321.5935 ext 232
albrecht@shakerlakes.org

2600 South Park Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44120
SHAKERLAKES.ORG

PLEASE CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RANGE OF GIVING OPTIONS
“THIS PLACE HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF JOY FOR MY FAMILY FOR THE 40+ YEARS THAT WE HAVE LIVED IN SHAKER. FROM THE TIME OUR CHILDREN WERE VERY SMALL, WE HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE THE WILD, LISTEN TO THE WINDS, TO SEE HERONS AND WALK THROUGH THE TREES.”

- Friend of the Nature Center