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Dear donors and friends,

Having recently celebrated my first anniversary as Executive Director, I am still heady with the energy of this extraordinary place and grateful to all the people who make it run: donors, trustees, exhibit developers, teachers, lab technicians, artists, Explainers, and many more. It’s hard to definitively describe the Exploratorium because it is so much more than a science museum, and it holds a unique meaning to everyone who experiences it. However, two distinct “parades” I marched in this past year serve well to exemplify the Exploratorium spirit for me.

On March 14 (or 3/14), I was delighted to lead our annual Pi Day procession, followed by more than 300 visitors holding 300 digits of pi. Pi Day was invented at the Exploratorium in 1988, and it is now celebrated in schools, universities, and museums throughout the world. This uniquely Exploratorium holiday honors some of our favorite things: yummy fruit pies, math, tinkering, whimsy, and making the invisible visible and more capable of being understood. Best of all, Pi Day is a community day when we open our doors to an incredibly diverse Bay Area community.

The following month, I was proud to walk with friends, colleagues, and the Exploratorium banner in the March for Science in support of curiosity and critical thinking. The Exploratorium was founded by physicist and educator Frank Oppenheimer nearly 50 years ago in response to similar concerns we have today. As Frank wrote, “A lot of people have given up trying to comprehend things, and when they give up with the physical world they give up with the social and political world as well. If we stop trying to understand things, I think we’re all sunk.” The past year has shown that our vision of a world where people think for themselves and can confidently ask questions, question answers, and understand the world around them is more important than ever. Our group of leaders and staff ended the march in UN Plaza in front of Sound Commons, an Exploratorium public space installation. Our Studio for Public Spaces staff created the engaging installation and works tirelessly to bring the museum’s spirit to public spaces across the Bay Area, uniting our community in learning and discovery.

At the Exploratorium, we are committed to having people come together to learn, wonder, and approach the world with curiosity and openness. I am proud to send you our Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report with more details about everything you have helped us achieve in the last year. Thank you for your steadfast support.

Chris Flink
Sakurako and William Fisher Executive Director

2017 ANNUAL REPORT
2017 OPERATING INCOME

TOTAL REVENUE: $47.31M

Contributed–Unrestricted:
$6.83M
Core Support and Special Events

Contributed–Restricted:
$11.14M
Program Restricted and Endowment

Earned Revenue:
$29.34M
Admissions, Membership, Retail, Statewide Teacher Professional Development Contract, Global Studios, and other Earned Revenue
2017 OPERATING EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES: $46.22M

Program & Exhibit Design: $19.42M
Institute for Research & Learning, Laboratory, Exhibit Design Studio, and Museum Experience

Administration: $13.72M
Executive Office, Facilities, Finance, Information Technology, Organizational Development, and Institutional Advancement

Frontline, Membership & Marketing: $7.96M

Business Development: $5.12M
Global Studios, Rentals, and Concessions
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

**Attendance:** 849,702

**Field trip attendance:** 139,000 field trips, with 63,000 of field trip visitors coming for free from Title I schools

**Free admission:** 109,411

**After Dark attendance:** 70,830

**Number of volunteers:**
A team of 263 volunteers and 71 service groups contribute approximately 20,000 hours annually.

**Number of member households:** 16,639

**Number of exhibits on floor:** 670 exhibits

**Social media reach:** 290,591

- **Facebook:** 133,812
- **Instagram:** 48,100
- **Twitter:** 97,600
- **YouTube:** 11,079

**Employees:** 621

- **Full-Time:** 245
- **On-Call:** 162
- **Part-Time:** 88
- **High School Explainers:** 126

**Employees: 621**

**Access:** Two thousand children and families engage in free science experiences through the Community Educational Engagement Program.

Seventy local nonprofits, libraries, shelters, and youth organizations have access to free community passes.

**Digital Reach:**
“Snacks” are miniature versions of some of our most popular exhibits at the Exploratorium. Educators can build Snacks for their classrooms using common, inexpensive, and easily available materials. The Snacks portal had 2.1 million page views by more than 700,000 unique users.

Our online professional development curriculum has been downloaded by more than 10,000 educators from more than 60 countries on 6 continents.

694 individual donors gave $3,249,192 in annual unrestricted support
2017 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Explainer stats:
During the last year, four former Explainers (who were with us 2013–2017) were hired for regular positions in the museum.

We employed 308 youth as Explainers.

Tinkering stats:
Online course participants through Coursera Fundamentals of Tinkering: 30,000 per year and growing daily

Making and Tinkering Community of Practice: 650+ members (museum educators, designers, teachers, librarians, etc.)

Our in-house teacher workshops featured 240 participants and represented 7,900 students.

Tinkering Studio visitors: 60,000 per year

Online blog visits: 165,000 per year
Teacher Institute/Institute for Inquiry facts: Over 33 years, the Teacher Institute (TI) has supported more than 23,000 educators locally, nationally, and internationally. Many of these participants are professional development providers who are estimated to have supported more than 60,000 additional teachers.

Currently, TI works with more than 1,000 teachers a year through a combined total of 13,000 hours of professional development in face-to-face workshops. These teachers are estimated to serve 150,000 students per year. TI’s online resources reach more than 700,000 unique visitors a year.

Since 1995, the Institute for Inquiry (IFI) has worked with more than 7,000 lead teachers and professional developers from districts, universities, and museums from 160 projects in 900 districts, 49 states, and 17 countries.

Our online professional development curriculum has been downloaded by more than 10,000 educators from more than 60 countries on 6 continents. IFI participants have influenced at least 200,000 teachers, and those teachers in turn have influenced 6,000,000 students internationally.

IFI’s current work provides teachers with discussion-rich lessons that help English learners improve science and English skills simultaneously.
William K. Bowes Jr., a former Board chairman and longtime champion of the Exploratorium, passed away on December 28, 2016. He chaired the Exploratorium Board for 10 years, followed by 9 years as Chairman Emeritus, and was tireless in helping the Exploratorium transition to its new location at Pier 15 in 2013.

Bill loved the Exploratorium’s ability to combine education with playfulness, and science with art. He believed strongly that the Exploratorium had an impact far beyond the museum floor. As he said just before the Exploratorium’s move to the Piers, “Our future depends upon an unwavering commitment to making thought leaders of all of us: inquisitive, curious people of character and intellect for our communities and for our society. This is what the Exploratorium seeks to give us, and there is not an institution on the planet better suited to deliver it.”

Bill worked for more than 20 years as an investment banker, later becoming a founding partner of U.S. Venture Partners, one of the pioneering venture capital firms of Silicon Valley. He helped found and lead Amgen, one of the Bay Area’s earliest biotechnology companies. Later, Bill transitioned into a “third career” in philanthropy through the William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation, donating generously to education, youth programs, environmental causes, culture and the arts, and science and medical research. Bill was a dedicated supporter of many cornerstone Bay Area institutions and nonprofits, among them the Exploratorium, UCSF, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco Opera, SFJAZZ, the Asian Art Museum, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Stanford Bio-X, KIPP schools, Teach for America, and many more.

Bill’s passion for science education will continue through his incredibly generous bequest to the Exploratorium, which doubled our endowment and will ensure the success of the Exploratorium’s education programs far into the future. Bill’s quiet optimism, warmth, and readiness to help will be deeply missed by the Exploratorium community.
Paul Doherty, a beloved Exploratorium scientist, educator, and mentor, passed away on Thursday, August 17, 2017. He will be remembered for his kindness, humility, intelligence, good humor, and fabulous fashion sense, but perhaps most of all for an unquenchable thirst for knowledge that he managed to inspire in those around him.

Paul had a knack for explaining the most complex science at exactly the right level, whether he was talking to children, Buddhist monks, or experts with PhDs in physics. He opened people’s minds about the possibilities of a life lived without boundaries, and he developed lessons and experiments that are being used in science classrooms across the world.

His presence will continue to be felt at the Exploratorium, and we will honor his memory by continuing to work in the service of inquiry-based learning, radical inclusion, and the teaching and investigation of science as a process for understanding the world around us.

To honor Paul’s life and work, a fund has been established in his name. All gifts to the Exploratorium’s Paul Doherty Fund are designated to support the Teacher Institute, our professional development home for middle school and high school math and science teachers since 1984. Please visit exploratorium.edu/support/doherty-fund for more information and to make a contribution.

“Be true to yourself. Don’t be afraid of what people say. Your life is your life, and you only get one.”
—Paul Doherty
INDIVIDUAL GIVING
Our thanks to the friends who helped support the Exploratorium with gifts made from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Their generosity provided much-needed resources to help deepen our impact on science education and hands-on learning worldwide.

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The support of our young professionals group helps us provide people of all ages with the tools and confidence they need to become active investigators and explorers.

Our thanks to the Exploratorium Lab members between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

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Gustavo P. Ambrozio
Nancy Amy
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