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Dear friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by how strongly all of our programs, exhibits, and events have recognized that there is something we need to encourage more of in the world:

Curiosity.

Curiosity creates connections. By encouraging questions and celebrating inquiry, the Exploratorium is transforming learning worldwide. Our vision is a society where everyone is inquisitive and engaged, no matter what field they work in, what their background is, or how they have done in school.

Curiosity builds confidence. The Exploratorium is driven by the belief that everyone has the power to figure out how the world works. We introduce visitors to the natural wonders around them and spark a lifelong love of learning. Perhaps you’ve experienced this yourself, losing track of time at a favorite exhibit. These flashes of wonder and understanding inspire us to keep exploring, including me and my kids.

Every one of the Exploratorium’s programs spring from this core belief, and I am thrilled to see our work traveling far beyond the museum’s walls to every corner of the state and beyond. I hope you feel the same pride as you read stories of our extraordinary and expanding impact on the following pages.

Thanks to you, the Exploratorium is celebrating a phenomenal milestone in 2019: our 50th anniversary! For five decades, we have brought joyful learning into classrooms, public spaces, and communities worldwide, and we are only growing our ambitions. Thank you for being part of our circle of amazing Exploratorium friends and believers.

With gratitude,

Chris Flink
Sakurako and William Fisher Executive Director
2018 OPERATING INCOME

Total revenue: $45.63M

- Contributed Income (Unrestricted) $6.45M
  - Core Support and Special Events

- Earned Revenue $24.93M
  - Admissions, Membership, Retail, Statewide Teacher Professional Development Contract, Global Studios, and other Earned Revenue

- Contributed Income (Restricted) $14.25M
  - Program Restricted and Endowment

2018 OPERATING EXPENSES

Total expenses: $45.43M

- Administration $14.16M
  - Executive Office, Facilities, Finance, Information Technology, Organizational Development, and Institutional Advancement

- Program and Exhibit Design $20.35M
  - Institute for Research & Learning, Laboratory, Exhibit Design Studio, and Museum Experience

- Business Development $3.83M
  - Global Studios, Rentals, and Concessions

- Frontline, Membership, and Marketing $7.09M
Students on the Move

This program was so fantastic. It made an otherwise impossible field trip possible for our students—many of whom have never been on BART, and some of whom have never been to San Francisco at all!

—May Chow Luo, Teacher, San Leandro Unified School District
STUDENTS ON THE MOVE

Field trips offer a place for experimentation and joyful learning for students whose schools have outdated science facilities, or no facilities at all. Through field trips, students who are historically underrepresented in STEM fields, such as Latinx and African-American students and English language learners, build confidence. Through field trips, the impossible becomes possible.

In the Fall of 2017, 23,000 students took part in a brand new pilot program created through a generous donation from Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock. Students coming to the Exploratorium on BART not only received free admission, but also free BART tickets, making field trips to the museum simple, accessible, and possible for more Bay Area teachers, schools, and students across the Bay Area.

This program was created as part of our commitment to empower educators to shape their curriculums: in a survey conducted after the field trips, 74% of teachers said they would not have otherwise planned a field trip, and 49% said they had brought their classes to the Exploratorium for the first time.

Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock’s continued generosity allowed us to keep the program going in Fall 2018, igniting a love of learning in thousands more young people. In our second year of the program, we are thrilled that we are on track to double the number of field trip visitors from the pilot year!

155,695
jaws

dropped*

23,000
pilot program
participants

*Total field trip visitors
Dr. Roberta Katz still remembers her first visit to the Exploratorium, long before she had any idea she’d become Board Chair. When Board member Shona Brown invited her to the Exploratorium, Katz was struck by the vitality of the place, “by the beauty of the exhibits, and by the fact that the kids were so engaged not just with exhibits but with each other.” If anyone knows young people, it is Dr. Katz; at Stanford she is a senior scholar conducting research on the worldviews and behaviors of people under the age of 25 (often referred to as “Generation Z”) who have grown up as much online as outside.

Katz has come to believe that experiential education is immensely important, not only for Generation Z, but for everyone. She has dedicated herself to understanding people in the service of building a better society and sees the Exploratorium as a powerful tool toward this end.

“Society is composed of individuals,” says Roberta. “The healthier they are, the better society is.”
Roberta took the helm as the Exploratorium’s first female Board Chair in July 2018. She follows in the footsteps of Chair Emeritus George W. Cogan, who led the Board of Trustees for 11 years and who will continue to play an active role on the Board, including as Chairman of the Special Gifts Committee.

“George has been such a spectacular chair and exemplary leader,” Katz said. “He has led the institution through an extraordinary decade of transformation.” During Cogan’s tenure, the Exploratorium raised more than $300M in order to expand and relocate to the waterfront, a move that resulted in doubling the numbers of annual visitors and student field trips, and initiated an ongoing expansion of the Exploratorium’s science teacher professional development programs across the state of California.
What do you get when you combine a dedicated committee of 23 families with 40 excited young leaders and let their imaginations take control of the Exploratorium on a Sunday afternoon? A new, family-focused fundraising event: Wonder Funday.
While children and their parents have always been at the heart of the Exploratorium community, this newly conceived philanthropic event inspires entire families to support boundary-breaking science learning locally and globally. Wonder Funday was brought to life to inspire the next generation of volunteers and philanthropists to build a vibrant community of engaged families working together to increase access for all Bay Area children to learn and play at the Exploratorium.

With two incredible committees at the helm—the Family Host Committee led by Wonder Funday Co-Chairs Cathryn Lyman and Kimberly Kuni Harding, and the Junior Explorer Committee of enthusiastic youth ages 6–13—the event was a smashing success. In its first year, we raised $198,000, hosted 150 families, and forged relationships with three new corporate event sponsors—Good Eggs, Bank of America, and Hint Water.

Mahika Shamdasani, parent of two Junior Explorers, shared the importance of the event for her family. “It’s a joy for us, both as parents and as members of the Bay Area community, to know that we’re supporting the Exploratorium’s immense educational reach, much of which goes on beyond the view of most museum visitors. Wonder Funday helps us reach at-risk children, provide new materials for educators, and help kids get started with tinkering.”

We were thrilled to continue strengthening this vibrant multigenerational community on November 4, 2018 with Wonder Funday: Explore the Globe, which brought even more families together to invest in curiosity.
That’s what I hope Buchanan Mall to be: a spark,” said Widya Batin, a resident and volunteer at the Buchanan Mall installation in the Western Addition neighborhood of San Francisco, which came to life with help from the Exploratorium’s Studio for Public Spaces.

As the name suggests, the Studio for Public Spaces brings exhibits involving science, art, and human perception outside our museum walls to unexpected places. This arm of our work, where communities co-design spaces for inquiry and learning, provides a unique opportunity to build relationships with and among our neighbors where they live.

Before community members partnered with the Exploratorium, Buchanan Mall was five consecutive blocks of underutilized public parkland perceived by residents as dangerous. Beginning in 2015, we worked alongside local organizations to engage residents in imagining the future of Buchanan Mall. “Central to our ethos is the idea that, if we can get people curious and inspired enough to dwell in a place, we can create greater opportunities for interaction,
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES: BUCHANAN MALL

understanding, and ultimately, community cohesion,” says Shawn Lani, Studio for Public Spaces Director. Investments coordinated by the Trust for Public Land allowed for the creation of community gardens, welcoming gateways, and interactive science exhibits that encouraged conversations and the sense of safety and belonging that residents were craving.

With support from Science Sandbox, an initiative of the Simons Foundation, this year we were able to offer site upgrades and youth training in science activity facilitation, and advise on a city plan to ensure the long-term vitality of the neighborhood. A celebration of the Buchanan Mall revitalization process happened August 25, 2018 as part of the 4th Annual Western Addition Peace Festival, and the park’s transformation will continue through 2021.

“My hopes and dreams are kinda already starting because I see tourists walking fully through these five blocks,” said Sasha Earle, a member of the Buchanan Mall Community Youth Leadership team.

14 project partners* 5 blocks transformed 3 years (and counting)

*Including SF Rec and Park, the Trust for Public Land, Citizen Film, and Green Streets
Supporting Teachers and Leaders Statewide

California’s adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS) represents an ambitious new approach to teaching and learning science. “The new standards go much deeper than a checklist of content to be taught and mastered. A central goal is to give students the chance to experience what actual scientists and engineers do on a daily basis, by engaging
in specific practices and techniques,” explains Jessica Parker, Director of Teaching and Learning.

This new approach is not only different for students; it is also a significant challenge for the teachers tasked with bringing the new standards into their classrooms. For the past two years, the Exploratorium has worked closely with the California State Department of Education, investors like the Stupski Foundation, and additional anonymous supporters to leverage our expertise in educating and exciting visitors about the natural world and to train educators to implement the new approach.

The Exploratorium Teacher Institute and Institute for Inquiry are leading this effort by creating and supporting a network of K–12 educators across California who serve as local advocates for science. Through workshops and online communities, they rediscover the joy of learning as they practice experiments from a student’s perspective, as well as develop the leadership competence and confidence to inspire and support teachers back home. Not only that, but they also have access to online tools and resources, and additional high-quality professional learning opportunities created by Exploratorium experts.

This focus on leaders has exponential impact: each leader empowers their own network of teachers, creating a multiplier effect that, by the end of the 2017–2018 school year, had already radiated across 47 of California’s 58 counties to reach an estimated 8,500 teachers.
SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND LEADERS STATEWIDE

FY16

- California counties reached
- Total teachers trained per county

FY17

- California counties reached
- Total leaders trained

FY17–18

- California counties reached
- Total teachers reached

350 unique leaders trained*

47 California counties reached

8,500 teachers impacted

*Through FY18
Our thanks to the friends who helped support the Exploratorium with gifts made July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Their generosity provided much-needed resources to help deepen our impact on science education and interactive learning worldwide.

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**Individual Giving**
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