



**Big Plans, Bright Futures**

**The  
Children's  
Museum**  
of the Upstate

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2021**

## OUR MISSION

Ignite a community of compassionate problem solvers through intentional and inclusive play.

## FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

### DEAR FRIENDS,

After a particularly difficult 2020, The Children's Museum of the Upstate (TCMU) welcomed 2021 with a renewed **sense of energy and optimism**. Calls from across our community—from educators to elected officials, parents to philanthropic partners—reaffirmed the need for our museum as an **educational resource in this community**. It was a year of recovery, and in many ways rebuilding, for TCMU, and the support we received from the Upstate in those efforts was overwhelming.

Under the leadership of our outstanding interim, Carol Thompson, our team grew considerably this year. We welcomed new staff in all departments of the museum. **They are tremendously qualified, creative, and dedicated**, and I know our community will benefit from their immense talents. Notably, TCMU welcomed a new Executive Director, Lauren Luneckas, who you will meet on the proceeding page of this report. We could not be more **excited for this new chapter** of leadership at the museum. I hope that you will be able to meet Lauren and our new team soon if you have not had the chance to already.

As you will see throughout this document, TCMU delivered exceptional educational opportunities for Upstate

families and children this year. During a time where classroom instruction was still altered and **learning gaps continued to be exacerbated** by COVID, this work carried an elevated sense of urgency and importance. From the opening of new exhibits, to continual facilities and exhibit improvements, revived programming in all STEAM disciplines, summer camps, and community events, TCMU was **delivering on its mission at every turn**.

As we approach 2022, we do so with a focus on Big Plans, Bright Futures. Those plans include two significant exhibit openings, new daily programming at both our locations, robust and varied community partnerships, and outreach opportunities that extend the museum's offering beyond our four walls. **The plans are big, but the future is indeed bright.**

It remains the highest honor to provide a home for **intentional and inclusive play** in the Upstate. The museum is truly a vital part of our thriving community. Thank you for your continued support of this special place and its critical mission.

*Connie Jones*

Connie Jones, Board of Directors  
Chair



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

**Kimbrell Blackwood**

**Eric Borowicz**

**John Boyanoski**

**Riley Dannelly**

**Satreva Dogan**

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**Rebecca Feldman**

**Vince Guerra**

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**Jessica Rustin**

**Bibby Sierra**

**Rob Stevens**  
*Treasurer*

**Carol Thompson**

**Rick Williams**

## OUR CORE VALUES

**We wow our visitors · We achieve excellence together**

**We embody a spirit of philanthropy · We wonder · We break barriers**

**We are compassionate problem solvers**



# WELCOME, LAUREN!



"I am honored to have the opportunity to join the TCMU team. The museum is a tremendous resource for Upstate residents and visitors alike. I so admire where the museum has been and look forward with great excitement to where we will go, and what we will achieve, next."

**-Lauren Luneckas**

In the summer of 2021, The Children's Museum of the Upstate embarked on an Executive Director search. After a successful search, **TCMU named Lauren Luneckas as its new Executive Director.**

Lauren joined the TCMU team in mid-September with more than **12 years of marketing, communications and fundraising experience in corporate and higher education settings.** Most recently, Lauren served as President of Greenville-based Kentwool Performance Apparel. Previous roles included marketing and communications positions at Bridgestone Americas and Bridgestone Golf, as well as development roles at Wake Forest University.

Lauren has a longstanding passion for early childhood education. She has served as a local classroom volunteer, PTA Board member, Library Committee member, and has contributed to various school improvement projects in the Upstate. She also served on the museum's board of directors for three years. **Lauren has a passion for community and education, making her a perfect fit to lead the museum's strategic and operational direction.**

**We are so excited to welcome Lauren to TCMU!**

## OUR VISION

Create a world where no barrier is bigger than a dream.



# CONSISTENT GROWTH

## ADMISSION, MEMBERSHIP & SCHOOL VISITS

Following a four month closure due to COVID-19, TCMU faced significant earned revenue losses in 2020.

As comfort levels with public activities increased through 2021, visitation increased, along with memberships. **TCMU met and exceeded its goals in Admissions and Memberships for 2021.**

School visits remained low throughout 2021, as field trips were not being booked.



## TOTAL NUMBER SERVED



SCHOOL VISITS  
\$22,500

MEMBERSHIPS  
\$163,436

TOTAL  
\$452,610

ADMISSIONS  
\$266,674

TOTAL  
\$1,306,717

MEMBERSHIPS  
\$422,365

ADMISSIONS  
\$870,985

SCHOOL VISITS  
\$13,367

2020

2021



# 2020

91,786

TOTAL VISITORS

9,246\*

SCHOOL CHILDREN

2,613\*

OUTREACH PARTICIPANTS

1,349\*

CAMP PARTICIPANTS

2,901

EVENT ATENDEES

*\*Due to pre-COVID operating capacities in Q1 2020.*

# 2021

169,631

TOTAL VISITORS

2,247

SCHOOL CHILDREN

1,242

OUTREACH PARTICIPANTS

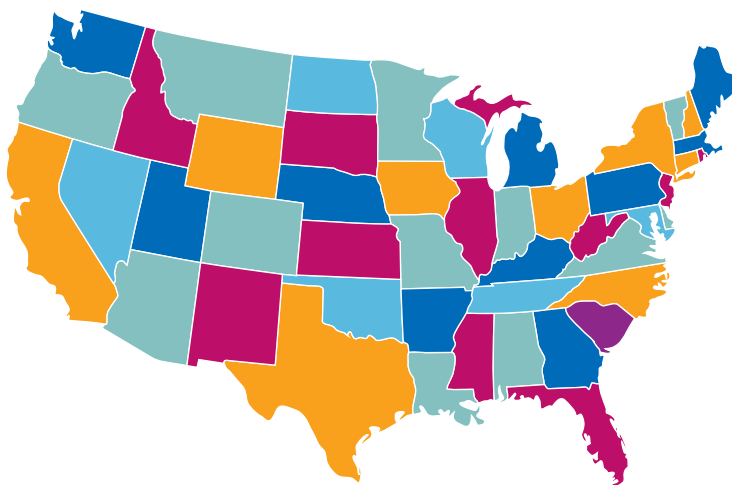
830

CAMP PARTICIPANTS

7,579

EVENT ATENDEES

## HOW FAR WAS TCMU'S REACH IN 2021?



119,228  
SC VISITORS

48,891  
OUT OF STATE

49  
STATES

4  
COUNTRIES



USA  
CANADA  
GERMANY  
UK

"We love, love, **LOVE** this place. It is a space where a kid can learn, **dream and just be a kid**. Worth every penny to become a TCMU member!" –**Jackson, TCMU Member**

# NEW WAYS TO PLAY

## EXHIBITS AT TCMU-GREENVILLE

The past year brought new and exciting exhibits to TCMU-Greenville!

In early 2021, the TCMU team designed and built its own putt-putt course—Geo's Golf: Swinging Through Greenville. This exhibit features 9 holes of putt-putt, each inspired by Greenville, with introductory STEM concepts of force, friction, traction and more introduced throughout.



In May 2021, *Constructing Community* opened. This is a quiet space that prompts children to learn about important community workforces such as first responders, Public Works teams and local restaurant employees. Children are invited to color letters, which are delivered personally to the groups recognized.



**"Sponsoring Geo's Golf was a fantastic experience.**

It is exciting to think of all the families who will interact with the exhibit, learn new concepts and hopefully—develop an interest in the game of golf."

**—Mike Kaplan, Green Valley Country Club**





*Fun & Games* made a refreshed debut on the 3rd floor and *The Upside Down* received a bright make-over. *Sensory Square* found its home on the 1st floor—providing a quiet space for sensory play by emphasizing the five senses.



“We are pleased to support TCMU and its newly opened Dream Theater. Through the **mission of intentional and inclusive play**, The Children’s Museum is engaging our community’s children with **unique educational experiences** ranging from the performing arts to STEM programs.”

– Minor Shaw  
The Daniel-Mickel Foundation

And on June 6th, TCMU-Greenville unveiled its new performance space—*The Dream Theater*! Complete with a mural by local artist Adam Schrimmer, this space is used for *Story Time & More* and theatrical performances. The mural depicts a whimsical downtown Greenville skyline and invites children to sit on the “rooftops” as they dream and engage.



Every exhibit is designed with the goal of creating spaces for children to learn through **imaginative and hands-on play**. Exhibits at TCMU provide a way for children to continue learning **outside of the classroom**, while also giving caregivers the opportunity to provide **educational and fun experiences** for their children.



# YOUNG MINDS AT WORK PROGRAMS AT TCMU

Free weekly programming returned in full in 2021. These offerings provide opportunities for families to learn, engage and discover together.

In September 2021, TCMU-Greenville's think-tank lab, steamWORKS, opened! Facilitated by TCMU staff, steamWORKS emphasizes areas of **Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math**. Children are encouraged to problem solve, think creatively and actively explore future careers in STEAM.

"steamWORKS is such a wonderful place to work! Interacting with the families and **watching children light up** when they are engaged in the activities **makes steamWORKS a special place** for both myself and our visiting families."

—Barbara,  
TCMU Programs Staff



STORY TIME  
AND MORE

**12X**  
WEEKLY



OPEN ART  
STUDIOS

**5X**  
WEEKLY



STEAM  
WORKS

**3X**  
WEEKLY



DREAM THEATER  
SPECIAL  
PROGRAMMING

**2-3X**  
MONTHLY



# ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY FOR ALL DREAMERS

**TCMU remains committed to its vision that no barrier is bigger than a dream.**

Through scholarship programs, **field trips** are covered for children on free or reduced lunch, or those enrolled at Title 1 Schools. **Museums for All** provides reduced admission for families receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits), and **Upstate Play Partners** provides other non-profits with free tickets for the families they serve.

Through a grant provided by *The Barbara Stone Foundation*, TCMU began its partnership with *Clarity: The Speech, Hearing and Learning Center*. Families of children with special needs were invited to the museum for **Fr-amily Nights** where they could hear from licensed professionals and meet other families with similar needs.

Additionally in 2021, TCMU made considerable efforts to make the museum inclusive for the Hispanic community. Digital and printed materials were translated to Spanish, and TCMU participated in events such as the Hispanic-American Women's Association holiday event supporting the Latinx community.



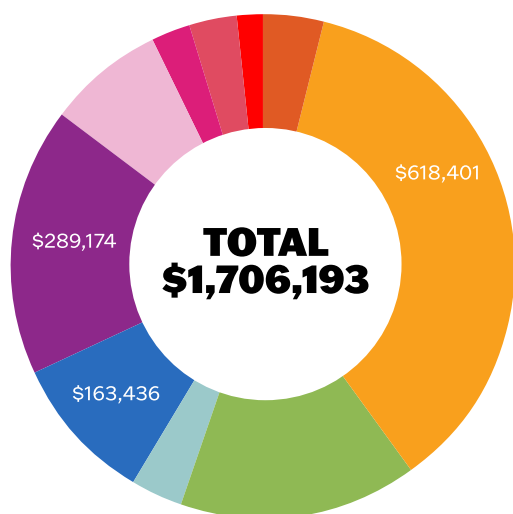
"Using a **lens of cultural intelligence**, TCMU has taken initiatives to support accessibility efforts to our **Latino and neurodiverse families!** As a Latina employee I am honored to be part of a team that is compassionate, and **breaking barriers for families to access** educational and experiential learning opportunities."

**—Alma, TCMU Development Staff**

# DOLLARS & CENTS

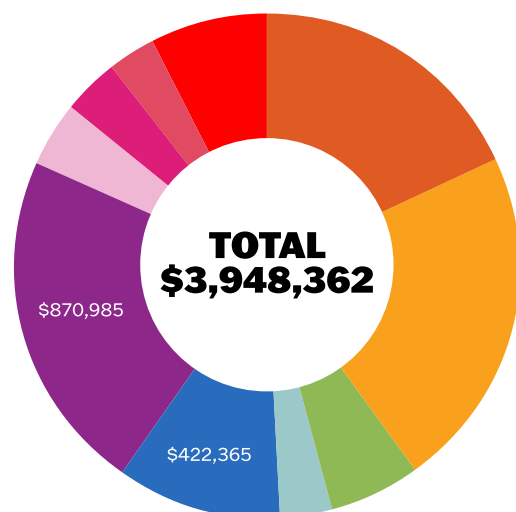
## 2020

### INCOME



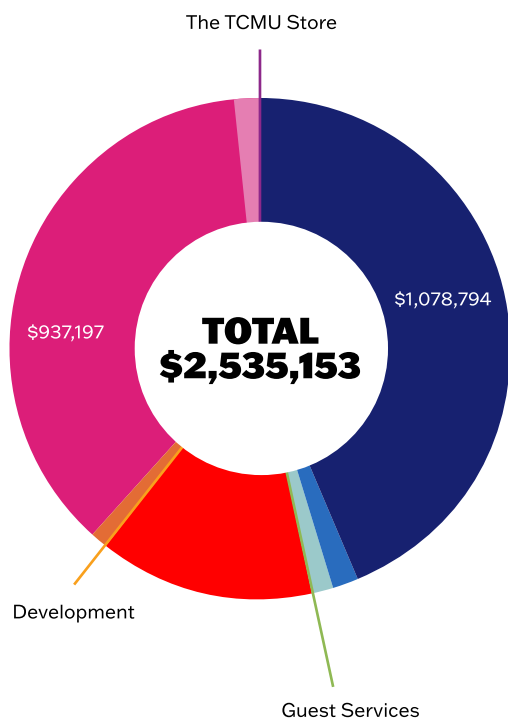
- ADMISSIONS
- PROGRAMMING
- THE TCMU STORE
- EVENTS AND RENTALS
- OTHER INCOME
- PUBLIC FUNDS
- GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS
- INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS
- FUNDRAISING EVENTS
- MEMBERSHIP

## 2021



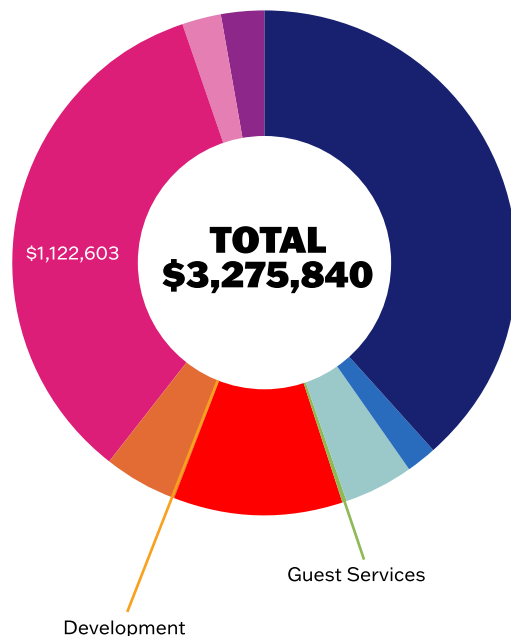
## 2020

### EXPENSES



- CORPORATE
- DEVELOPMENT
- MARKETING
- FACILITY
- EVENTS AND RENTALS
- THE TCMU STORE
- PERSONNEL
- PROGRAMMING
- EXHIBITS
- GUEST SERVICES

## 2021





# COMMUNITY SUPPORT & KEY FUNDRAISING MOMENTS

In 2021, The Children's Museum of the Upstate was incredibly lucky to have a supportive donor base through the continuation of the pandemic. TCMU was lifted up by individuals, companies, and foundations who believe in our mission and vision.

**Through your support of our work, we provided experiential learning, fresh new exhibit experiences, and outreach play for children in Title I schools and at community events around the Upstate.**

We are forever grateful to the incredible people who support our mission. Thank you!

68

NEW INDIVIDUAL DONORS

66

CORPORATE DONATIONS

22

GRANTS AWARDED

## EXHIBIT SPONSORSHIP

TCMU looks forward to our big plans for new exhibits in 2022 and beyond. Let us know if you are interested in sponsoring one of our incredible exhibits!

OPENING SPRING 2022:  
**Prisma Health Children's  
Hospital-Your Healthy Body**

OPENING SUMMER 2022:  
**Wheels on the Ground**

OPENING FALL 2022:  
**Bib's World refresh  
supported by Michelin North America**

"Supporting the Wheels on the Ground exhibit for TCMU is an exciting opportunity to engage our little learners with an industry that impacts the Upstate in a unique way. Not only are they learning and growing, but they are having fun along the way."

– Annette Bradshaw



## OTHER WAYS TO GIVE:



MAKE A STOCK GIFT



EVENT SPONSORSHIP



BE A VOLUNTEER



GIVE MONTHLY

## SAVE THE DATE!

**July 30: Birthday Bash**

TCMU-Greenville  
*Adult-only fundraiser*

**August 5: Countdown to Kindergarten**

TCMU-Spartanburg

**October 29: Trick-or-Treat**

Both locations

**December 10: World WONDERland**

Both locations

"The Children's Museum of the Upstate is top-tier quality. Absolutely perfect for kids to play, learn and meet other children their own age. Honestly, it is one of the best children's museums I've visited around the country! We are so grateful to have this family resource in our community and can't wait to see what they bring to life next."

**-Christopher, TCMU Visitor**



**[www.TCMUpstate.org](http://www.TCMUpstate.org)**



**SUPPORT TCMU'S BIG PLANS AND EVEN BRIGHTER FUTURE TODAY!**