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ANNUAL
REPORT



HOUSTON MUSEUM
of NATURAL SCIENCE

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HOUSTON MUSEUM of NATURAL SCIENCE

The mission of the Houston Museum of Natural Science shall be to preserve and advance the general knowledge of natural science; to enhance in individuals the knowledge of and delight in natural science and related subjects; and to maintain and promote a museum of the first class.



President's Letter

The year 2021 proved to be of great significance in our Museum's history. We emerged from the last two years with resiliency, alacrity, and clarity. We established a new five-year Strategic Plan which has been wholly embraced by our board, fervently implemented by our staff, and the fruits of which are beginning to be enjoyed by our visitors. Everything the Museum has done this year has been in pursuit of four primary goals.

First, we strived to deliver a flawless museum experience to our 1.7 million visitors. A bigger, better Hall of Ancient Egypt reopened alongside *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*, a special exhibition co-organized with the Egyptian Council of Antiquities. We also improved wayfinding signage, expanded our Visitor Services team, and invested in user-friendly and customer-oriented technology.

Second, our staff worked tirelessly to ensure we are serving diverse communities. By augmenting many of our programs, we have virtually reached audiences of all ages and backgrounds—even far beyond Houston to places like Mexico City and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In addition, all three of our campuses are now Certified Autism Centers.

Third, Museum finances were reinforced in myriad ways: our member community grew by leaps and bounds; Spring Break shattered all prior attendance records; and philanthropic support doubled over the last two years, including a record-breaking *Annual Gala*.

Fourth—and at the core of our mission—we continued the never-ceasing endeavor to be an informal science education leader. We found ways to effectively support schools as they navigated an unpredictable year, successfully serving over 94,000 teachers and students.

We have been able to achieve all of this because of you. On behalf of everyone here at the Museum working hard to create unparalleled experiences and ignite that elusive spark of curiosity—thank you. This is a pivotal time for HMNS, and we are humbled by and grateful for your sustaining support.



Joel A. Bartsch
HMNS President and C.E.O.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Leadership

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Joel A. Bartsch,
HMNS President and C.E.O.
Patricia Hazlett,
HMNS Guild President

Year in Review

1,752,157 VISITORS
ACROSS ALL THREE
CAMPUSES



1,687,094
Hermann Park



57,854
Sugar Land



7,209
George Observatory



4,818 NEW MUSEUM MEMBERS

579 VOLUNTEERS
dedicating a total of 40,714 hours



369,209 VISITORS TO SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

EDUCATION REACH:
94,352 PEOPLE



3,087 VISITORS TO THE DIG PIT
AT HMNS SUGAR LAND



195 ATTENDEES TO FAMILY
MOVIE NIGHTS

17,183 LISTENS ON
BEYOND BONES PODCAST



311 BIRTHDAY PARTIES



635 SCOUTS AND 4,093 SUMMER CAMPERS



44 EXPEDITION
CENTER MISSIONS
at Hermann Park and
George Observatory

284,301 FOLLOWERS ACROSS ALL
SOCIAL PLATFORMS
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok

International followers from:



EGYPT

INDIA

ITALY

BRAZIL

CANADA

PAKISTAN

MEXICO

PHILIPPINES



Education

HMNS works with 1,750 education partners annually to design and administer youth, adult, and educator programming, historically reaching 500,000 people each year.

In 2021, Museum efforts focused on mitigating learning gaps magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic and expanding access to education programming. In addition, Education staff were committed to supporting community educators by delivering programming in line with school needs. The transition to a mix of both virtual and in-person activities allowed us to welcome back familiar faces and reach new audiences.

YOUTH EDUCATION

As the cornerstone of our education initiatives, youth programming is designed to encourage children to explore their passion for science and inspire a new generation of STEM leaders.

FIELD TRIPS: HMNS AT HOME

Prior to 2020, over 300,000 students took field trips to the Museum each year. Although we hope to see a return to these pre-pandemic levels, the ability of our staff to mobilize and pivot to online formats allowed us to continue engaging students and educators throughout 2021.

We expanded the *HMNS at Home* webpage, created in 2020 as a way to access all of our educational resources in one place, including: virtual tours, how-to blogs, labs, and discounted movies from the Giant Screen Theatre and Planetarium. *HMNS at Home* was added to the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented website as a “go-to resource” for Texas educators.

283 VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES for 10,604 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

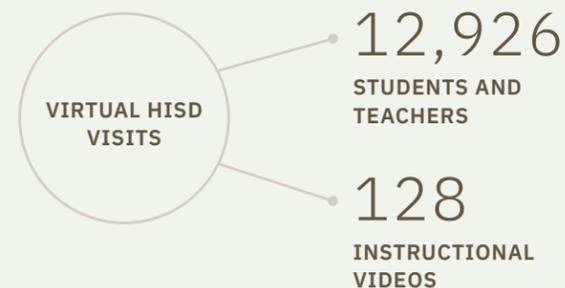
HMNS at Home is presented by Mitsubishi Corporation.



HISD PROGRAM

For over 50 years, HMNS has partnered with the Houston Independent School District to provide thousands of students with a docent-led tour, Planetarium show, and hands-on lab. In this unique partnership, HISD teachers develop and present a Museum experience that is aligned to the District’s scope and contains an embedded assessment of student learning.

The program is offered to all HISD 4th graders and serves to reinforce scientific concepts through a memorable learning opportunity at the Museum. Additional experiences and STAAR testing programs are offered to 2nd and 5th grade students. With HISD schools remaining online or on-campus for a majority of the 2020-21 school year, staff delivered virtual programs to 150 different elementary schools.



In October, we hosted HISD Superintendent Dr. Millard House II for a tour and preview of education programs. Following the visit, he announced the return of field trips in spring 2022. We look forward to welcoming students back to the Museum and thank HISD for their invaluable partnership.



Planetarium Astronomer James Wooten and VP of Astronomy and Physics Dr. Carolyn Sumners conduct a virtual Planetarium visit.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Aramco iExplore program, designed to teach Galena Park ISD students biodiversity curriculum aligned with TEKS objectives, was converted to an entirely virtual format in 2021. Students were led on an immersive Museum adventure accompanied by correlating activities in digital workbooks. Galena Park teachers also participated in a workshop to ensure that the materials were implemented effectively. Pre- and post-program assessments showed a marked improvement in content areas covered by the program.



Associate Curator of Paleontology David Temple teaches iExplore students about paddlefish.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Outreach programs allow us to bring the wonders of the Museum directly to schools and reach students who may be unable to visit due to geographical or financial barriers. As schools began to open up throughout the year, staff offered both virtual and in-person outreach formats. Virtual programs extended beyond Houston, to cities including Dallas, El Campo, Mexico City, Mexico, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



SUMMER PROGRAMS

As an extension of the Museum's school-year programming, Summer Camps and Scouts classes offer children the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Museum while participating in exciting hands-on activities. In 2021, in-person programs were limited to enrollment at 50% capacity with masks and health monitoring. Virtual programs featured an HMNS educator leading activities and a tech moderator.



Volunteers

The Museum would like to thank our community of dedicated volunteers, who contributed a total of 40,714 hours at our three locations in 2021. Just some of the ways volunteers help HMNS include giving tours and demonstrations, providing administrative support, and caring for the plants and insects in the Cockrell Butterfly Center.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the HMNS Volunteer Guild, who provide vital leadership to the volunteer program. These individuals bring an exceptional energy to our halls every day, and we are grateful to have their support.



2021 Moran Ecoteens



HMNS Volunteer conducting a guided tour.

MORAN ECOTEENS / TEEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Since 2005, through the generous support of the W.T. and Louise J. Moran Foundation, more than 1,000 students have participated in the Moran Ecoteen program. This program offers teens the opportunity to strengthen leadership skills and pursue interests in science while also serving the community. Ecoteens assist with onsite and virtual Summer Camps, tours, and ad hoc projects. In 2021, there were 135 Ecoteens representing 40 schools across Houston.

As part of the Museum's expansion plan for youth programming, the Moran Teen Advisory Council was launched in the fall. The TAC helps plan teen events, create social media content, and generate ideas for helping community teens further their academic and professional interests. Members were selected through an application process taking into account their ideas, skill sets, academic merit, and geographical diversity.





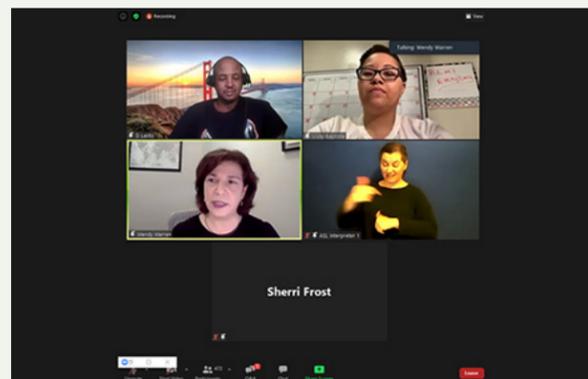
ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education programming in 2021 highlighted the variety of resources available in our community. The Museum partnered with local businesses and institutions to ensure that content remained innovative and culturally diverse.

HMNS is also in the unique position to be in the center of the world's energy capital and surrounded by five distinct ecoregions. Staff leveraged the proximity and knowledge of developments in the energy industry to incorporate sustainability topics into programming.

CELEBRATING DIVERSE VOICES

During Black History Month, HMNS partnered with the Holocaust Museum Houston to present "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks." The lecture featured members of Lacks' family and explored the relationship between race, class, and informed medical consent. Over 900 people tuned in, including international attendees from Australia, China, Japan, Mongolia, and the United Kingdom.



"The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" virtual lecture.



Birding excursion at the Houston Audubon Raptor and Education Center.

Additional programming represented a variety of cultural, historical, and technological subjects, including:

- "A Tale of Two Buried Cities: Contrasting Pompeii with Ostia Antica" lecture with author Louis F. Aulbach and Linda Gorski, Houston Archeological Society
- *Happy Hour: Xin Chào* event with Chef Christine Ha
- *Happy Hour: Cheese the Day!* event with Houston Dairymaids
- "Lines to the Gods: The Nazca Geoglyphs" lecture with Becky Lao, Archaeology Now, and Dr. Johnny Isla, Nazca Lines Project, with the Peruvian Ministry of Culture
- "Origins and Tenacity of Myth in Archaic Period Rock Art" lecture with Professor Carolyn Boyd in partnership with the Texas Archeological Society and Shumla Research and Education Center

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Our annual *Celebration: Earth* event took place throughout April and featured nature-themed exhibits, tours, and activities. Special screenings in the Giant Screen Theatre and Planetarium showcased the delicacy of life on our planet. Additional programming incorporated topics on green energy, watershed management, and conservation, including:

- Birding excursion at the Houston Audubon Raptor and Education Center
- "DIY IRL: Foraged Delicacies: A Walk on the Wild Side" lecture with chemist Mark Vorderbruggen
- *Happy Hour: Happy Earth* event with Jesse Stowers, Happy Earth Composting
- "I Spy with My Little Eye... Biodiversity!" City Nature Challenge training session with Jaime González, The Nature Conservancy
- "Resilient Houston: Mapping Houston's Urban Heat Islands" lecture with Marissa Aho, City of Houston
- Water treatment plant excursion with Adrian Broussard, City of West University Place



EDUCATORS

Educator Workshops are redesigned each year to offer teachers professional development and the opportunity to earn state-mandated training hours. Virtual Workshops are created around current exhibitions, with 2021 topics including “Pompeii” and “The Plague.” Gifted and Talented Workshops focus on recognizing diverse learning needs and promoting gifted thinking through Museum materials. One hundred percent of participants in a post-assessment survey requested that workshops continue in the 2021-22 school year.

HMNS is delighted to partner with Shell USA, Inc. to bring educators to the Museum twice a year for free. In December, 360 educators attended the Shell Educators’ Preview for *Ramses the Great*, with rave reviews from attendees.



Red Elementary teachers pose with Karl the Velociraptor.



Proficiencies supported by informal learning:

- Experience excitement, interest, and motivation to learn about phenomena in the natural and physical world
- Students think of themselves as science learners and develop an identity as someone who knows about, uses, and sometimes contributes to science
- Informal learning does not need to be outside the classroom!

Accessibility

HMNS has been working to expand its accessibility initiatives for children and adults with sensory sensitivities and autism spectrum disorders. In 2021, staff across all three locations completed Autism and Sensory Awareness training. This allowed for HMNS at Hermann Park’s recertification as a Certified Autism Center and for HMNS at Sugar Land and the George Observatory to obtain this status for the first time.



Visitor Services team member Alex Hightower, with Accessibility Programs Manager Matti Wallin, presents one of the Sensory Backpacks he created and donated to the Museum.

Our *Sensory Friendly Events* expanded to Sugar Land with a beta-tested event in October. During these events, exhibits and venues are modified to create a sensory neutral environment. Touch carts and sensory backpacks are also provided to visitors. Staff collected feedback and survey responses from attendees to modify future events as necessary.

Sensory Friendly Events are generously supported by The Stanford and Joan Alexander Family Fund.



These guests informed us that their child was able to engage with the exhibits for longer than usual as a result of feeling comfortable in the sensory-friendly environment.

Exhibits & Collections

The Museum's permanent collection, spanning diverse disciplines, histories, and cultures, is the foundation on which we build all of our exhibitions and programming. In 2021, 389 objects were accepted into the collection. We thank the following 2021 collection donors:

- ◆ Ms. Marisol Arteaga Bastidas
- ◆ Boston Children's Museum
- ◆ Dr. Dan Brooks
- ◆ Ms. Lisa Browning
- ◆ Mr. John Buxton
- ◆ Mr. David Glover
- ◆ Mr. Tom Hardwick
- ◆ Dr. Edward F. Heyne
- ◆ Mrs. Gail Holmes Allen
- ◆ Houston Audubon Raptor and Education Center
- ◆ Peter Lacovara, Ph.D.
- ◆ Antonio La Pastina, Ph.D. and Mr. Dale Rice
- ◆ Mr. Willy Lyon
- ◆ Mr. Edward Hudson
- ◆ Mrs. Sue McGovern-Huffman
- ◆ Ms. Mary McMahan
- ◆ Moody Gardens
- ◆ Mr. Barry Moore
- ◆ R. A. Vines Environmental Science Center
- ◆ Mr. Howard Rosenthal
- ◆ Mr. Rick Roton
- ◆ San Diego Zoo
- ◆ Mrs. Dana Simon
- ◆ Mr. William Siegel
- ◆ Mr. David Temple
- ◆ Valobra Master Jewelers
- ◆ The Vaughn Family Foundation
- ◆ Mrs. Shelley Walters
- ◆ Dr. Edward F. Wente
- ◆ The W. T. & Louise J. Moran Foundation
- ◆ Mr. Michael Zargarov
- ◆ Mrs. Mona Zegarelli
- ◆ Zoo Tampa

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

ANTHROPOLOGY

Throughout the year, the Anthropology Department focused on acquiring objects and producing content for two of our permanent exhibit hall renovations: the Hall of Ancient Egypt—which reopened in November—and the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas—set to open in September 2022. For more information on the Hall of Ancient Egypt, please visit pg. 20.



Fig. 1

1 Cosmetic dish

Egypt • New Kingdom Late Period • Blue Faience

This faience cosmetic dish was crafted from the hollowed-out reverse of a bound oryx. A familiar sight in Ancient Egypt, the oryx was often hunted for meat, horns, and leather. The oryx's copper and green-blue body, with manganese black spots and horns, is typical of faience designs from the Third Intermediate Period (approx. 750 B.C.).



Fig. 2

2 Votive cup

Egypt • Third Intermediate Period • Blue Faience

Nesikhonsu, wife of Egyptian King Pinedjem II (970 B.C.), was buried with this votive cup and a suite of others as part of her funeral rituals. The hieroglyphic inscription on the cup gives her name and title: "First leader of the musicians of the god Amun." Made out of the finest, bluest faience, these votive cups have long been considered the "blue ribbon" of the ceramic collector.



Fig. 3

3 Ear stud

Egypt • Late 18th Dynasty • Glass • Acquisition made possible by the Moran Young Philanthropists

The Ancient Egyptians were one of the first cultures to use glass. From approximately 1400 B.C. onward, glass jewelry such as this ear stud brightened up the outfits of the upper classes. Although we now think of glass as a low-cost material, for the Ancient Egyptians it was incredibly valuable and more versatile than stone.



Fig. 4

4 Cosmetic jar

Egypt • Middle Kingdom • Pink Limestone • Acquisition made possible by the Moran Young Philanthropists

In the hot and arid climate of Egypt, Ancient Egyptians used oils and fats to keep their skin supple and stored them in cosmetic jars. This jar has been masterfully carved out of rare pink limestone and can be dated to the Middle Kingdom of Egyptian history (approx. 1800 B.C.) due to its high-shouldered shape and unusual material.

The new John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas will feature galleries highlighting the different regions and histories of North, Central, and South America. The hall's central theme, "We the Peoples: Here and Now," celebrates today's vibrant Indigenous communities as well as their presence in the Americas from time immemorial. HMNS is working closely with an Indigenous Advisory Council to ensure that Native histories and contemporary voices are accurately represented.



Fig. 5

5 Qayaatxūx, Bentwood closed-crown hat

Unangaġ (Aleut) • Aleutian Islands, Alaska • Late 1700s – early 1800s A.D. • Wood, pigments, plant fibers • Acquisition made possible by the McGovern Foundation



Fig. 6

6 "Down Under," Sea hunter's hat

Hat made by Scott Jensen (non-Indigenous/adopted Tlingit), painted by Thomas Stream (Sun'aq Aleut) • 2016 A.D. • Hemlock, yellow cedar, simulated sea lion whiskers, beads, feathers, acrylic paint • Acquisition made possible by the McGovern Foundation

The traditional hunting hat pictured above represented nobility and status in Aleutian society. Its elongated shape provided shade, echoed the form of hunting kayaks, and spiritually connected the hunter to its prey. The modern interpretation below incorporates animal iconography to celebrate each animal's individual spirit and connect them to the Aleut people, who share the same environment. Although Aleut hunters no longer use these hats, old traditions are still alive and appreciated.

PALEONTOLOGY

The Paleo Fossil Preparation Lab reopened to the public in March with additional health and safety measures. The department is also working to strengthen the Museum's Green River Fossil Collection, which has been built over the past decade with leading support from the Benton Family Foundation, the George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, and Paula and Rusty Walter. As fieldwork continues, HMNS hopes to eventually house the finest collection of these fossils in the world.



Fig. 7

7 Bat fossil in matrix

Blue Moon Quarry, Wyoming • Acquisition made possible by the Benton Family Foundation

At approximately 52 million years old, this fossil is one of the most complete bat fossils ever discovered. Although still under analysis, it is believed to be a species of *Icaronycteris index*. Complete bat fossils are incredibly rare, as their tiny and fragile bones do not normally preserve well. Imaging of the bat's ear bones revealed that this fossil is of the oldest type of micro bat that hunted by echolocation.

MALACOLOGY

The Museum was selected as a participant in the National Science Foundation grant, "Eastern Seaboard: Mobilizing Millions of Mollusks." The purpose of the grant is to better understand mollusk distributions over time by georeferencing collections from around the nation. It is also hoped that the research will lead to improved methods of conservation management. HMNS contributed data from a 1960-70s survey on mollusk populations along the Texas Coast, representing over 34,000 specimens.



Fig. 8

8 *Spondylus pickeringae*

Eilat Coral Reefs, Gulf of Aqaba • Gift of Mr. Rick Roton

Spondylus pickeringae is an eye-catching specimen that inhabits areas of the Red Sea, where it attaches to rocks and corals. It remains stationary all its life and survives by filter feeding, depending on the passing banquet of microorganisms for food. Its long spines provide protection from predators as well as areas of attachment for algae, allowing for additional camouflage.

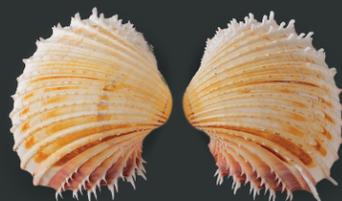


Fig. 9

9 *Procardium indicum*

Angola, Africa • Gift of Mr. Rick Roton

Discovered by Baptiste Lamarck in 1819, this species of bivalves remained elusive for over a century until its natural environment became more accessible. This specimen was found off the coast of Angola and is considered to be a near-perfect sample due to having a majority of its spines and original coloration.

VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY

This year, the Vertebrate Zoology Department created a dedicated webpage (HMNS.ORG/HUWP) for the longstanding Houston Urban Wildlife Project. This program was created in 2000 to promote wildlife conservation and allow individuals to contribute directly to scientific research. A recent highlight includes data collected on the Free-tailed bats at Houston's Waugh Bridge, which has resulted in several publications.



Fig. 9

9 Shoebill skull specimen

Gift of Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park

The African Shoebill is a species of stork with a specially modified bill for foraging. The tip of the bill features a hook that can extract hibernating lungfish from the mud of dried wetlands. Shoebills are considered a vulnerable species, threatened by habitat modification and disturbance. In light of this, they are never taken by hunters and are a rare find in museum collections.

MINERALOGY

The Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals features one of the most renowned collections of precious gems, jewels, and natural mineral crystals in the world. In 2021, the status of this world-class collection was further elevated with the acquisition of the Ann Hamman Aquamarine. This "million-carat mega cluster" was discovered in 2019 in the Kashmir province of Northern Pakistan, a prolific gemstone-producing region.



The extraction crew poses with the aquamarine specimen and its associated pieces.



Fig. 10

10 The Ann Hamman Aquamarine

Aquamarine specimen with quartz, albite, k-feldspar, schorl, and tourmaline • Nyet-Bruk, Braldu Valley, Skardu District, Gilgit-Baltistan, Northern Pakistan • Acquisition made possible by anonymous donors in honor of Mrs. Ann H. Hamman and her unwavering support of HMNS

This exceptional aquamarine is widely regarded as the most important group of gem-quality aquamarine crystals in existence. The formation, discovery, and recovery of this mineralogical masterpiece required a string of fortuitous geochemical, natural, and logistical miracles. It is believed that a find of this magnitude is unlikely to occur again.

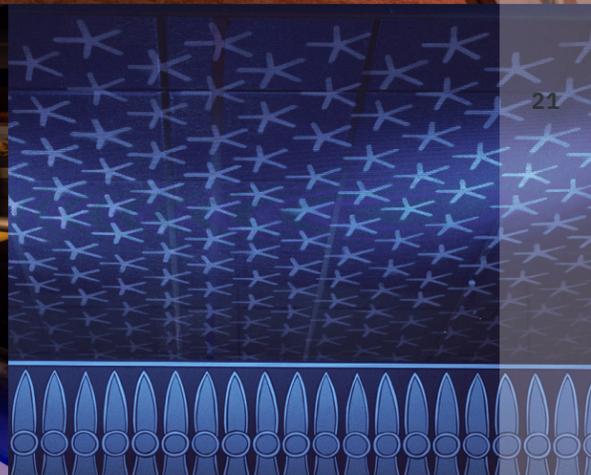
HALL OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The renovated Hall of Ancient Egypt opened to the public in November, in conjunction with the world premiere of the traveling exhibition, *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*.

The hall spans 12,500 square feet and houses over 500 artifacts representing different aspects of ancient Egyptian society. Eight immersive galleries were designed to mirror the art and architecture found in temples, throne rooms, and burial chambers, including recreations of King Tutankhamun's funerary shrine and the tomb of Queen Nefertari.

Additional highlights include the thematic lighting, striking sculptural entrance, and mappings of Abu Simbel. New projections and object labels provide a wider cultural and historical context to the Museum's significant Egyptian collection.

Historically one of the Museum's most popular exhibit halls, the reimagined space provides visitors with an elevated and immersive look into life in Ancient Egypt.



The Hall of Ancient Egypt is generously supported by Apache Corporation and Paula and Rusty Walter. Loans were kindly provided by private and public lenders including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva, the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, and the Denys Eyre Bower Bequest, Chiddingstone Castle.

Special Exhibitions

POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION

Feb. 12, 2021 – Sept. 6, 2021

Visitors were transported back to 79 A.D. on a journey through the ancient port and trading city of Pompeii. A simulated eruption showcased the true impact of Mount Vesuvius' explosion, with full body casts forever frozen in time. The special exhibition also featured over 150 artifacts from the Naples National Archaeological Museum, including mosaics, frescoes, armor, household items, and jewelry.

Supported by HMW Entertainment and the Consulate General of Italy in Houston.



VICTORIA THE T. REX

April 2, 2021 – Sept. 12, 2021

HMNS hosted a special presentation of Victoria the T. rex, known as the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton touring the world. Rather than using cast copies as is typical, Victoria's skeleton was completed using 3D-printed bone replicas. The presentation explored Victoria's life, her role as a mother, and the unusual circumstances which may have led to her death.

Produced by IMG in partnership with specimen owners Aber and Megan Whitcomb.



EVERYDAY FABERGÉ

April 2, 2021 – 2023

In April, hundreds of Fabergé masterworks were unveiled inside the McFerrin Gallery in the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals. The stunning objects highlight Carl Fabergé's ability to transform even the simplest of items into stunning ornamental accessories, along with the highly skilled goldsmiths who were hired to run their own workshops under the Fabergé name.

Made possible by the generous underwriting of the McFerrin Foundation.



TROPICAL ODYSSEY

May 28, 2021 – Aug. 15, 2021

This immersive exhibition at HMNS at Sugar Land encouraged children to climb, jump, and fly their way through the butterfly lifecycle as they learned important lessons on sustainability and the many treasures of the rainforest.

Created by Minotaur Mazes. Local support was provided by the Fort Bend Junior Service League.



TRAINS OVER TEXAS

Nov. 20, 2021 – Jan. 2, 2022

This seasonal exhibit takes visitors around Texas by O scale model railroad. Miniature passenger trains move through major cities and landmarks, including Big Bend National Park, Pedernales Falls, and Enchanted Rock.

Local support provided by the Carruth Foundation, Inc., Glen A. Rosenbaum, and Union Pacific Foundation.



BODY WORLDS AND THE CYCLE OF LIFE

Dec. 17, 2021 – Sept. 5, 2022

This exhibition returned to HMNS with a new iteration on the “cycle of life,” focusing on the ways in which the body grows, matures, and wanes. *BODY WORLDS* was created by Dr. Gunther von Hagen, whose technique halts decomposition in humans and animals and allows us to examine anatomy in detail through each stage of life.

Presented by Woodforest National Bank.

RAMSES THE GREAT AND THE GOLD OF THE PHAROHS

Nov. 20, 2021 – June 19, 2022

A multisensory museum experience provided guests with a window into the life and accomplishments of Ramses II, more commonly known as Ramses the Great. Visitors observed one-of-a-kind relics and stunningly preserved artifacts, including sarcophagi, animal mummies, amulets, and ornate golden treasures of the tomb, all showcasing the superb workmanship of Ancient Egyptian artists.

Organized by the Supreme Council of Antiquities of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, with World Heritage Exhibitions and Cityneon.



TREASURES IN GOLD & JADE: MASTERWORKS FROM TAIWAN

Sept. 17, 2021 – Feb. 6, 2022

Treasures in Gold & Jade featured striking and complex sculptures from two of Taiwan’s premier artists. Huang Fu Shou expertly carves jadeite and nephrite to depict exquisite nature scenes, while Wu Ching’s intricate castings capture the majesty of gold and reflect on the nature of being.

Organized by the Bowers Museum and the Houston Museum of Natural Science and supported by the Taiwan Academy in Houston, an arm of the Taiwan Ministry of Culture. Local support provided by the Harriet and Truett Latimer Endowment Fund and the John P. McGovern Foundation.



Venues

BURKE BAKER PLANETARIUM

128,616

TOTAL VISITORS IN 2021

Each year, the Burke Baker Planetarium provides thousands of visitors with premier astronomical programming and serves as an integral part of our HISD partnership. Despite operating at a limited capacity throughout 2021, the Planetarium remained a favorite among guests.

Starry Night Express, a live presentation of the night sky, continued to be one of our most popular original programs. Astronomy staff also created a new show, *Death of the Dinosaurs*, in celebration of the Museum's inaugural *T. rex Week*. The showing has since become a permanent fixture on the schedule.

The Museum's portable planetarium, the Discovery Dome, delivered 236 programs to schools across Houston. The experience was modified with capacity limits, increased fan speeds, and a UV lamp to disinfect surfaces between each program.



Venues

WORTHAM GIANT SCREEN THEATRE

54,900

TOTAL VISITORS IN 2021

Films at the Wortham Giant Screen Theatre transport audiences into larger-than-life stories, elevating the average movie experience with intense color, detail, and sound. Since 1989, over 16 million visitors have enjoyed an experience at the Giant Screen Theatre.

As part of the Museum's Strategic Plan to invest in new technology, the Theatre underwent a laser projection upgrade in the fall. The new system provides enhanced visual quality and a more immersive 3D experience.

Dinosaurs of Antarctica was one of the most popular films of the year, taking visitors on a journey through the polar continent millions of years ago. *Great Barrier Reef*, an underwater drama exploring one of the seven wonders of the natural world, was also a hit with audiences.

Dinosaurs of Antarctica was produced by Giant Screen Films. Major funding was provided by the National Science Foundation.

Great Barrier Reef is a December Media film produced in association with Slattery Family Trust, Biopixel, Soundfirm, Film Victoria, and Screen Queensland and distributed by MacGillivray Freeman Films.



Venues

COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER

271,320

TOTAL VISITORS IN 2021

Home to a living butterfly habitat, 50-foot waterfall, and thousands of arthropod specimens, the Cockrell Butterfly Center captivates visitors of all ages. This year, the Butterfly Center was our most visited venue, with the highest attendance numbers in over a decade.

After navigating February's unprecedented storm Uri, staff worked to establish a more uniform natural environment throughout the conservatory. Efforts included introducing new plants, replacing feeders and structures with natural materials, and monitoring butterflies to ensure greater flight activity throughout the day.

Education programming also remained a priority. Bugs on Wheels, the Outreach program which transports the critters of the Butterfly Center directly to schools and learning centers, reached 4,331 people. Adult Education classes focused on the importance of pollinator gardening and habitat conservation.

The annual *Spring Plant Sale* was held virtually in April. The event has become a favorite among our plant-loving patrons, and this year proved no exception with 1,200 plants sold.

The Cockrell Butterfly Center is generously supported by The Cockrell Foundation and The Garden Club of Houston.



HMNS at Sugar Land

Since opening in 2009, HMNS at Sugar Land has aimed to provide its nearly 100,000 annual visitors with fun and educational experiences connected to the history, nature, and industries of Fort Bend County.

This year, the Museum focused on expanding its nature-based programming, with updates to the Pollinator Garden as well as the opening of the Insect Zoo and Outdoor Learning Center. Support for these projects was generously provided by The George Foundation and the City of Sugar Land 4B Corporation.



William J. Kocurek Outdoor Learning Center



The William J. Kocurek Outdoor Learning Center opened to the public in March. This extended outdoor area provides space for additional activities during field trips, Scouts classes, and Summer Camps. In addition, it helps meet visitor needs as we move through the pandemic, when outdoor learning is so critical to the community. Programming at the OLC focuses on native plants and insects, with events such as *Paint & Plant*, *Butterfly Preservation*, and *Make a Mini Pollinator Garden*.



Jingle Tree, HMNS at Sugar Land's annual fundraising event, was held in November and raised \$70,493 for operating costs and *Sensory Friendly Events*. Per tradition, the Museum was filled with intricately adorned Christmas trees—decorated by local artists, designers, and community members—as part of a week-long silent auction. This year's event was presented by Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital.

The new Insect Zoo features terrariums with live insects such as tarantulas, cockroaches, and grasshoppers and provides an entertaining way to incorporate TEKS science objectives into field trip activities.



The George Observatory

The George Observatory reopened in March, following a two-year closure to address repairs and equipment upgrades. Renovations included updating telescope interfaces and projectors, redesigning interior exhibits, and completing structural upgrades.

Support for renovations was generously provided by The George Foundation and The Henderson-Wessendorf Foundation. HMNS also held a *Give a George for the George* community fundraising campaign, which was accompanied by an additional matching grant from The George Foundation and raised a total of \$56,000.

As one of the only facilities in the nation that opens its research-grade telescopes to the public on a regular basis—including a ten-ton, 36” Gueymard telescope—these renovations allow us to continue providing innovative programming and unique experiences to visitors less than an hour from downtown Houston.

Saturday Stargazing events were incredibly popular throughout the year, with over 75% of weekends selling out. The purchase of new remote cameras allowed celestial objects to be virtually broadcast in greater detail than ever before. In 2021, there were a total of 5,197 physical and virtual *Stargazing* attendees spanning the greater Houston area.

HMNS is grateful to Brazos Bend State Park for its longstanding partnership and support of operations at the George, as well as to our dedicated volunteers who provide assistance with daily programming and visitor services.



Saturday Stargazing at The George Observatory





Strong visitation numbers also contributed to a successful year for memberships, as sales exceeded \$4.5 million for the first time ever. In addition, the year closed with 56,420 member households, a 9% increase from 2020 and the highest year-end total since 2010. We extend our immense gratitude to all of our members for their continued support and belief in our mission.

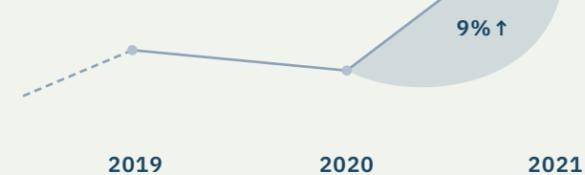
\$4,500,000+

TOTAL SALES IN 2021

All-time record

56,420

TOTAL MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS



This year also marked the second year of the Educator Buy One, Give One campaign, where a membership is donated to an educator for any Family-level or higher membership purchased. A total of 3,021 educator memberships were donated in 2021. Over 800 of these new members have also enjoyed teacher workshops, lectures, and behind-the-scenes tours.

Membership & Visitor Services

As one of the most visited museums in the nation, HMNS depends greatly on the strength and dedication of our Membership & Visitor Services Department. Despite the changes and uncertainties brought by the past few years, they remained committed to providing each of our guests with a fun and welcoming experience.



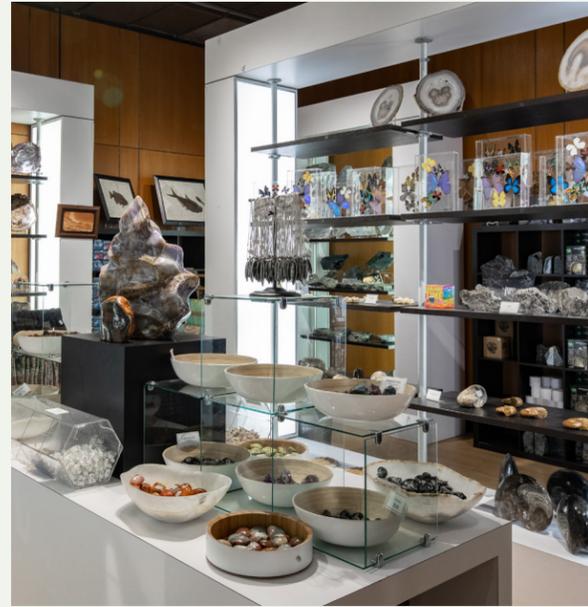
The department expertly managed a marked increase in visitors from the year prior, beginning with Spring Break which surpassed all previous attendance records. Team members also took on additional shifts during the last weekend of *Pompeii: The Exhibition*, as Museum hours were extended to accommodate demand. In December, the opening of *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs* required the onboarding of 70 additional staff, four times what is usually required to cover a special exhibition.



Marketing & Museum Store

EVENTS

Each year, the Marketing Department produces a variety of events for our adult visitors. Two of our most popular and longstanding events, *Mixers & Elixirs* and *Spirits & Skeletons*, returned in 2021 following a brief hiatus due to the pandemic. *Mixers & Elixirs* has been a fixture at HMNS for over two decades and taken many variations over the years. In its current phase, it takes place monthly throughout the summer and features live music, cocktails, food trucks, and dancing in the Museum halls. The annual Halloween bash, *Spirits & Skeletons*, first began 15 years ago and is consistently one of our most-attended events. Due to COVID-19, attendance for this year was limited and quickly sold out.



MUSEUM STORE

The Museum Store brought in just under \$3 million in revenue in 2021, meeting and exceeding the planned yearly budget at both Hermann Park and Sugar Land locations. In the summer alone, over \$1 million in revenue was brought in by the Store for the first time since 2014.

Over the course of the year, more local vendors were featured. From hand-brewed teas and unique jewelry to butterfly art and more, the increased presence of these artisans aligns with the Museum's overall efforts to support diverse communities throughout Houston.

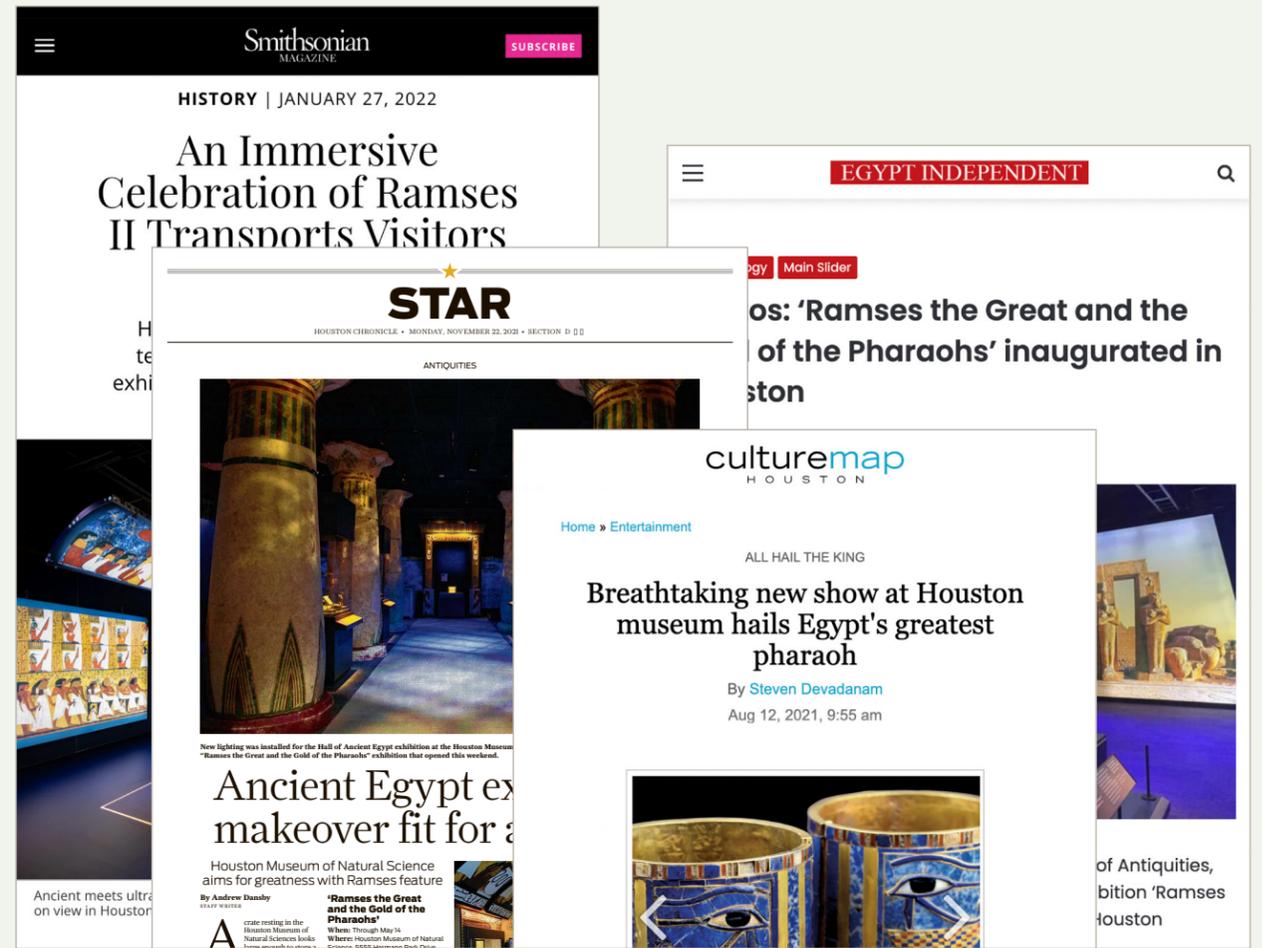
The Store held several events in 2021 to engage with visitors of all ages, such as *Endless Love*, *Summer Trunk Shows*, *Bug Bites*, *Spooky Treats*, and *Story Time with Santa*. *Sip-n-Shop*, held biannually for Mother's Day and Christmas, allowed guests to shop for presents after hours while enjoying holiday festivities.



Spirits & Skeletons



Mixers & Elixirs



Public Relations

The opening of the Hall of Ancient Egypt and *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs* in November generated substantial media buzz among local, national, and international outlets. Staff were grateful for the overwhelmingly positive reception that both the hall and special exhibition received, as well as the opportunity to reach new audiences through this generous press coverage.



The Museum also served as a location for season 19 of the popular competition series, *Top Chef*. Judging for the dinosaur-themed episode took place in the Morian Hall of Paleontology. Photos by David Moir / Bravo.

Development

Through the leadership of our trustees and magnanimous support of our donors, the Museum raised \$7,127,925 for general operations and programs in FY21. These funds include contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations, as well as proceeds from the *Annual Gala* and *Excellence in Science Luncheon*. In addition, campaigns to renovate the Hall of Ancient Egypt and the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas were successfully completed.

SPECIAL EVENTS

HMNS hosted three distinct special events to bring our supporters together and raise funds for operational needs: the *Annual Gala*, the 2020 *Excellence in Science Luncheon* (rescheduled due to the pandemic), and the 2021 *Excellence in Science Luncheon*. Thank you to our event chairs, underwriters, and attendees for making 2021 a record-breaking year.



2021 ANNUAL GALA: TOUR THE WORLD

March 6, 2021 • Chair: Bobbie Nau

The *Tour the World* evening raised just over **\$2.6 million**, making it the highest-grossing gala in HMNS history. Following an unprecedented year spent mostly at home, guests were invited to “travel” through the Museum’s diverse permanent collection and special exhibits. The success of the *Gala* was made possible through the colossal efforts of Chair Bobbie Nau, who wrote personal notes with each invite and created video vignettes throughout HMNS to garner excitement among guests.



EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE LUNCHEON

The *Excellence in Science Luncheon* celebrates achievements in STEM education. Through an endowed fund established by The Cockrell Foundation, awards are presented to two educators and two students from the Houston area. The two luncheons held in 2021 raised a combined \$607,225.

2020 LUNCHEON

March 25, 2020 • Chairs: Ernest H. Cockrell, George Lindahl III, Al Walker, Rusty Walter
Honoree: Henry R. Hamman

FEATURING

A presentation on the Chicxulub Asteroid by Dr. Sean P.S. Gulick, University of Texas Institute for Geophysics. This impact event was responsible for the “Fifth Great Extinction” of more than 75% of the Earth’s species and the end of the Mesozoic Era.



2020 Luncheon winners. From left to right: Derek Devore, Anna Marie Mozisek, Paige Roberson, Alex Jones.

2021 LUNCHEON

October 13, 2021 • Chairs: Courtney and Jason Fertitta, Jennifer and Walter O’Donnell

FEATURING

A special unveiling of the Museum’s recent acquisition and the tale of its precarious retrieval: the Ann Hamman Aquamarine. This specimen is the only one of its kind and size in the world. For more information on the aquamarine, please visit page 19.



2021 Luncheon winners. From left to right: Katelynn Lee, Molly Nipper, President Joel Bartsch, Jerome Muniz, Katarina Wilson.

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Financial Report

Statement of Financial Position *as of December 31, 2021 and 2020*

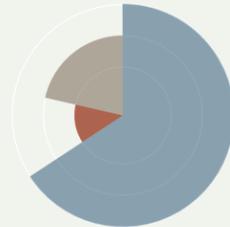
Assets	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash	23,653,037	7,779,971
Prepaid expenses and other receivables	371,159	293,444
Inventory and other assets	3,132,050	2,644,115
Operating contributions receivable, net	31,117,253	18,658,369
Cash restricted for capital and permanent exhibits	4,079,114	4,326,974
Contributions receivable restricted for capital and permanent exhibits, net	12,089,477	13,430,171
Property, net	133,744,731	126,618,306
Investments	77,902,426	69,725,582
Collections	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	286,089,247	243,476,932

Liabilities and Net Assets

LIABILITIES	2021	2020
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	2,703,556	1,681,241
Construction payable	631,574	-
Accrued interest expense	41,872	459,797
Accrued payroll and related benefits expenses	585,313	1,491,765
Deferred fees and program revenue	2,717,369	2,052,403
Refundable advances for special events	553,778	808,669
Notes payable	42,324,834	28,486,883
TOTAL LIABILITIES	49,558,296	34,980,758
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	130,380,802	123,583,162
With donor restrictions	106,150,149	84,913,012
TOTAL NET ASSETS	236,530,951	208,496,174
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	286,089,247	243,476,932

OPERATING REVENUE

63% Earned Revenue
24% Government Grants
13% Contributed Revenue

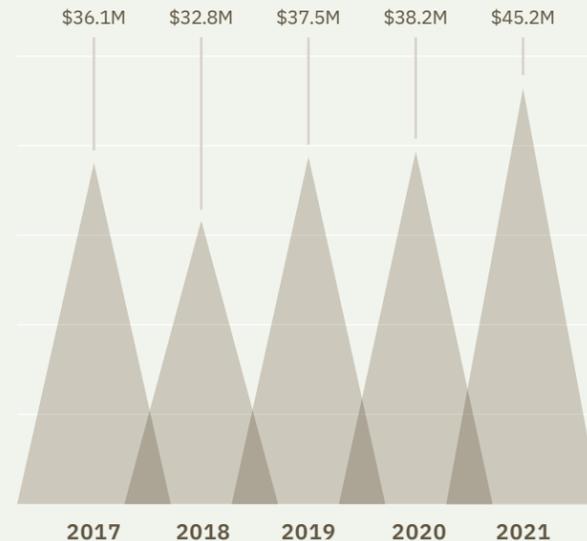


OPERATING EXPENSES

73% Program and Supporting Services
17% Management and General
10% Fundraising



ENDOWMENT FUND



Statement of Activities *for the year ended December 31, 2021*

Operating Revenue	W/OUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	W/DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
FEES AND PROGRAM REVENUE			
Admission fees	16,602,082	-	16,602,082
Membership fees	3,712,887	-	3,712,887
Gift shop sales	3,306,819	-	3,306,819
Cost of goods sold	(1,588,160)	-	(1,588,160)
Parking fees	1,911,688	-	1,911,688
Educational program fees	1,562,765	-	1,562,765
Facility rental, food services, and exhibit participation fees	1,453,700	-	1,453,700
CONTRIBUTIONS			
Government grants	-	12,253,162	12,253,162
Other contributions	2,887,936	1,597,898	4,485,834
Special events	2,636,258	-	2,636,258
Cost of benefits provided to donors	(632,818)	-	(632,818)
Net investment return	3,686,636	275,099	3,961,735
Other income	701,857	-	701,857
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	36,241,650	14,126,159	50,367,809
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS			
Program expenditures	14,382,686	(14,382,686)	-
Expiration of time restrictions	2,900,000	(2,900,000)	-
Investment earnings distributed from endowments	1,715,083	-	1,715,083
TOTAL	55,239,419	(3,156,527)	52,082,892
Operating Expenses			
PROGRAM SERVICES			
Museum collections and exhibits	11,685,556	-	11,685,556
Admissions and visitor services	5,791,095	-	5,791,095
Educational programs	2,723,323	-	2,723,323
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	20,199,974	-	20,199,974
Management and general	5,691,866	-	5,691,866
Advertising and public relations	3,282,552	-	3,282,552
Fundraising	2,484,994	-	2,484,994
Gift shop	1,185,125	-	1,185,125
Membership development	835,079	-	835,079
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	33,679,590	-	33,679,590
Changes in Net Assets from Operations	21,559,829	(3,156,527)	18,403,302
OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS			
Non-operating contributions	-	24,488,199	24,488,199
Net investment return	-	4,603,940	4,603,940
Collection purchases	(17,745,581)	-	(17,745,581)
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS			
Endowment distributions	-	(1,715,083)	(1,715,083)
Collection purchases	1,507,005	(1,507,005)	-
Capital expenditures	1,476,387	(1,476,387)	-
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	6,797,640	21,237,137	28,034,777
Net assets, <i>beginning of year</i>	123,583,162	84,913,012	208,496,174
Net assets, <i>end of year</i>	130,380,802	106,150,149	236,530,951

Ways to Give

Your generosity ensures that the Houston Museum of Natural Science may continue to advance its mission to serve the community as a leader in informal science education. Below are just some of the ways to give:

ANNUAL FUND

Support the Museum's ongoing needs with a gift to the Annual Fund. Donors of \$2,500 or more are invited to join our premier donor group, the President's Society. Members enjoy additional benefits including private events and exhibition previews.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Become an underwriter or purchase tickets for the *HMNS Annual Gala*, *Excellence in Science Luncheon*, and *Critter Crawl* (our reimagined family-friendly event).

CORPORATE GIVING

Join our Partners in Science program. Your company will receive a number of employee benefits and recognition, while supporting our education programs.

PLANNED GIVING

Make a planned gift and join the Legacy Society. Sustain HMNS for generations.

MATCHING GIFT

Double your support by donating through your company's matching gift program.



For more information, please visit [HMNS.ORG/GIVE](https://www.hmns.org/give), email DEVELOPMENT@HMNS.ORG, or call 713-639-4746.



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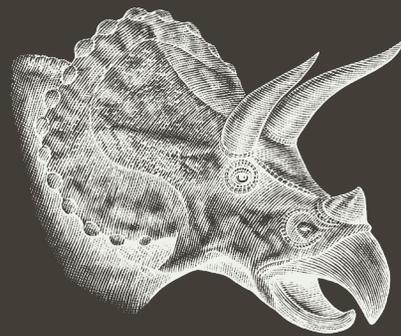
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HOUSTON MUSEUM
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