



Annual Report

FY26



www.discoverygateway.org



Who We Are

Mission

To inspire children of all ages and abilities to imagine, discover, and connect with their world to make a difference.

Vision

To be the most trusted and preferred family discovery center and child-centered educational resource in Utah.

DGCM Core Values

Me

Pride

Integrity

Respect

How I Show Up

- I have fun in my work to inspire children
- I do my job and something extra every day
- I do what I say I am going to do
- I am direct and honest with my fellow team
- I treat others like I want to be treated
- I always assume good intentions from others
- I ask questions to understand

We

Communicate

Innovate

Serve

How We Treat Each Other

- Go to my supervisor with ideas or concerns
- We speak positively and spread optimism
- We respectfully share new ideas at the right time
- We are open to trying new things
- We make others feel welcomed and appreciated
- We go above the ask to make it awesome

DGCM

Efficiency

Discipline

Excellence

How DGCM Succeeds

- We embrace simplicity
- We are frugal and use our resources wisely
- We play by the rules because it creates fairness
- We receive instruction or redirection graciously
- We strive to be the best children's museum
- We make this a great place to work

Our Philosophy



Discovery Gateway Children's Museum provides a fun informal learning space for all generations to connect and discover together. With over 60,000 square feet of exhibit space located in the heart of the city, the Children's Museum operates as a community resource that inspires creativity, encourages lifelong learning, and provides an accessible point of entry for a lifetime of museum patronage.

This was a landmark year for mission impact. Museum Inclusion Fund redemptions grew 50% this year, reaching 1,305 visits across our 16 nonprofit partner organizations. Our Access for All and Sensory Inclusive programs reached over 15,000 additional individuals, ensuring the museum remained open and welcoming to families of every background and ability.

Cultural programs and partnerships with community groups and artists create a diverse and inclusive environment. The Children's Museum welcomes everyone in our community.

The Children's Museum remains committed to being an educational resource every family in our community can access, regardless of traditional barriers to entry.

FY26 Highlights

For several years, the children's museum has been opening a new exhibit about every six months. The process from initial conception to opening day is exhilarating. Opening our UTA Transit Exhibit this spring took months of collaboration across the organization, including education, exhibit fabrication, marketing, philanthropy, and operations. The results make every child smile the moment they step onto our UTA bus.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff, donors, and partners, we are four years ahead of our strategic plan to fully renovate the museum; our finances are strong, and our exhibit lineup is innovative and forward-thinking.

Financial Stability

Discovery Gateway Children's Museum continues to build on the momentum of a strong FY25, when contributed revenue reached \$2,128,249, exceeding our fundraising goal by \$671,049. This year, we put that momentum to work as FY26 was spent executing on the exhibits and initiatives those funds made possible, including the UTA Transit Exhibit and continued progress on The Children's Rooftop Garden Exhibit, set to be the largest children's rooftop garden in the country. Big-D Construction and AMD Architecture have contributed thousands of dollars in pro bono construction and design services toward Garden, further extending the impact of every dollar raised.

In FY26, the museum came in \$409,426 under its expense budget, reflecting disciplined financial management. We also continued growing the Museum Inclusion Fund and broader access programming, core to our mission of removing barriers to entry, providing over \$211,000 in access value to more than 16,000 individuals this year, reducing barriers to entry and ensuring every child in our community can access informal cultural and scientific education.

New Exhibits

- We have been opening a new exhibit every six months since 2021, with our museum on track to be fully renovated by the end of 2026, four years ahead of our original 10-year plan and fully funded through generous corporate partnerships.
- In April 2026, we opened our UTA Transit Exhibit in partnership with Utah Transit Authority, immersing children in the world of public transportation through hands-on experiences using real, repurposed bus components inside a child-size bus. The exhibit was celebrated with a private employee and family preview, followed by a public grand opening the next day.
- We are currently in construction of a reimagined Intermountain exhibit, developed in partnership with Intermountain Children's Hospital and focused on children's mental health, a first-of-its-kind experience for a museum in our region.



Kathleen Bodenlos
CEO & Executive
Director



Viola Miller
Board Chair

FY26 Highlights

- Coming up, we have a veterinary exhibit in the lineup, sponsored by Mountain West Veterinary and USU College of Veterinary Medicine, with additional exhibits to follow.
- Fundraising is underway for our rooftop garden exhibit, with a goal to break ground by fall 2026, set to be the largest children's rooftop garden in the U.S.
- Each new exhibit reflects our commitment to designing experiences that engage all generations, where children and adults alike can discover, connect, and learn together. This approach positions the Children's Museum on the cutting edge of children's museums nationally.

STEAM

- Our outreach education team visited every district in the state, teaching science to over 62,344 students and supporting 4,599 teachers.
- Our afterschool program, involving five Title 1 Salt Lake City district elementary schools, resulted in 46 visits, reaching 487 children and 56 educators.

Awards:

- Visit Salt Lake Salt Awards nominee, Scene Maker category (attractions, venues, caterers, event production, transportation services)
- Kathleen Bodenlos, CEO, named to the Titan 100, recognizing Salt Lake City's top 100 CEOs and C-level executives for vision and leadership.
 - Among this executive group, Kathleen was hand-selected to join the Titan 100 national board of directors.

Publicity:

- Kathleen Bodenlos, CEO, speaker at the Utah Museum Association Annual Conference, Presentation on Strategic Planning, Kanab, UT, Fall 2025
- FOX 13 The Place, "There's a lot of family-friendly fun over Labor Day weekend"
- KSL TV, "Not sure where to trick-or-treat? Here are some ideas across Utah"
- The Salt Lake Tribune, "Utah's best-known shopping mall"
- KUTV Fresh Living, "Discovery Gateway Children's Museum unveils new transit exhibit"
- ABC4 Utah, "Next stop: fun! Discovery Gateway Children's Museum to open UTA exhibit, teaching future commuters"
- PBS Utah, "Discovery Gateway: Where Kids Learn Through Play"
- Salt Lake Sideways, "Discovery Gateway"
- Red Iguana, "8 Fun Things To Do Near City Creek Center In Salt Lake City"
- Salt Lake Chamber, "Speaking on Business: Discovery Gateway Children's Museum"



Financial Stability

Through innovation and best practices, the Children's Museum remains committed to building a sustainable financial model. Our approach is built on both earned and contributed revenue, and while FY26 brought real headwinds, including leadership turnover in our accounting function, a shifting nonprofit funding landscape, and broader economic pressure on discretionary spending, we continued investing in the partnerships, grants, and individual giving relationships that will strengthen our organization going forward. We also continued developing new offerings to keep our exhibits relevant and desirable to visitors and members, ensuring that we stayed focused on the mission and experience families come to us for. Looking ahead, we remain focused on diversifying our revenue streams and deepening the relationships that have carried us through this year, so that the Children's Museum is positioned to grow stronger in the years to come.

Earned Revenue

The Children's Museum remains committed to maintaining a balanced revenue structure of both earned and contributed revenue. Earned revenue reached \$1,852,322 in FY26 and the museum secured \$1,178,251 in contributed revenue finishing the year with a net decrease of \$214,094 after expenses.

Admissions

DGCM earned \$1,232,032 of the budgeted \$1,585,000 goal. With an increased focus on customer service, exhibit maintenance, and an exciting portfolio of new exhibit offerings coming soon, DGCM intends to exceed the upcoming year's admission's revenue goal.



Sun shining through the Honey Climber Exhibit

Memberships

Memberships accounted for \$236,294 in revenue of the budgeted \$300,000 goal.

Birthday Parties

The museum continues to bolster a strong birthday party program with FY26 revenues reaching \$43,878.

Investments

DGCM continues to benefit from the strategic management of the organization's investment portfolio. As a result, the museum concluded FY26 with \$42,379 worth of investment income of the budgeted \$80,000 goal.

Earned Revenue

Facility Rentals

Facility rentals earned \$12,700 this year of the projected \$35,000 goal. Improving facility rental revenue remains a top priority for the museum, and the upcoming Children's Rooftop Garden Exhibit represents a significant opportunity for growth in this area. Once complete, the rooftop garden will be marketed as a distinctive event space for weddings, baby showers, and other private celebrations, opening a new revenue stream for the children's museum.

Field Trips

The museum's field trip program contributed approximately \$71,000 in revenue this year, part of a combined Program Fees category that also includes special programming. Together, Program Fees reached \$124,990, exceeding the \$75,550 budget driven by strong demand across both field trips and special events.

Special Programs and Events

The museum continued to see strong attendance across its special program offerings throughout the year. Highlights included specialty art classes, Read to Therapy Dogs sessions, mermaid storytime, HawkWatch events, and holiday programming celebrating MLK Day, Black History Month, and Autism Awareness Month. The museum also welcomed 1,056 attendees across its four Museum Inclusion Fund community day events. These programs generated \$53,991 in revenue, contributing to the \$124,990 in combined Program Fees, as reported above.



Caregiver supervising children creating in the Art Studio

Contributed Revenue

Contributed revenue totaled \$1,178,251 in FY26, building on a standout FY25 in which contributed revenue reached \$2,128,249, exceeding that year's goal by \$671,049. Much of FY26 was spent putting that momentum to work, executing on the exhibits and initiatives those funds made possible, including continued progress on the UTA Transit exhibit, Intermountain children's mental health exhibit, and The Children's Rooftop Garden exhibit.

Corporate Contributors & Foundations

Corporate and foundation support totaled \$137,711 of our \$330,000 goal. Key partners included (but not limited to):

- Mark Miller Subaru
- Intermountain Healthcare
- Adobe
- Staker Parson
- AMEX
- Simmons Family Foundation
- Associated Food Stores
- Goldman Sachs
- Sorenson Legacy Foundation
- Utah Transit Authority
- Fidelity Investments
- Eccles Foundation
- Marathon Petroleum
- PNC Foundation

Grants

Grant funding (state and local) totaled \$628,939, coming in 11% below the \$706,000 goal. Contributors included Utah's iSEE (Informal Science Education Enhancement) program, Utah Division of Arts and Museums, and the Salt Lake City Arts Council.



In addition to the generous support of dedicated foundations and grantors, The Children's Museum is grateful to Salt Lake County residents for their support of the Zoo, Arts, and Parks (ZAP) program which provided \$309,596 of critical support to our organization.



A young boy and his father interacting with the Utah Transit Authority exhibit.

Individual Contributions

Individual donor contributions totaled \$20,355 of our \$30,000 goal. Looking ahead, a donor wall of sponsored butterflies within The Children's Rooftop Garden will give supporters a lasting way to be part of the exhibit and help grow individual giving.

Contributed Revenue

Medallion Partners

The Medallion Program, supported by the Museum Inclusion Fund, remains a vital initiative at The Children's Museum. Through this program, the museum provides tickets and access to cultural celebrations to trusted nonprofit partners, who then distribute them to the underserved families they serve. This effort is powered by the generosity of corporations, foundations, individual donors, and families who believe in the importance of museum access for all children.

This year, the Museum Inclusion Program provided 1,305 admissions to families served by our nonprofit partners, a 50% increase over FY25, representing \$18,109 in access value. We are grateful to collaborate with the sixteen nonprofit partners who make this program a success, including Best Seat in the House SLC, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Salt Lake, DDI Vantage, Head Start, Friends of Utah Children, International Rescue Committee, Neighborhood House, Odyssey House, Primary Children's Hospital, Project Connection, The Children's Center, Road Home, Ronald McDonald House, Guadalupe Center, and Utah Youth Village.



Child interacting with the Water Play exhibit elements

Exhibits

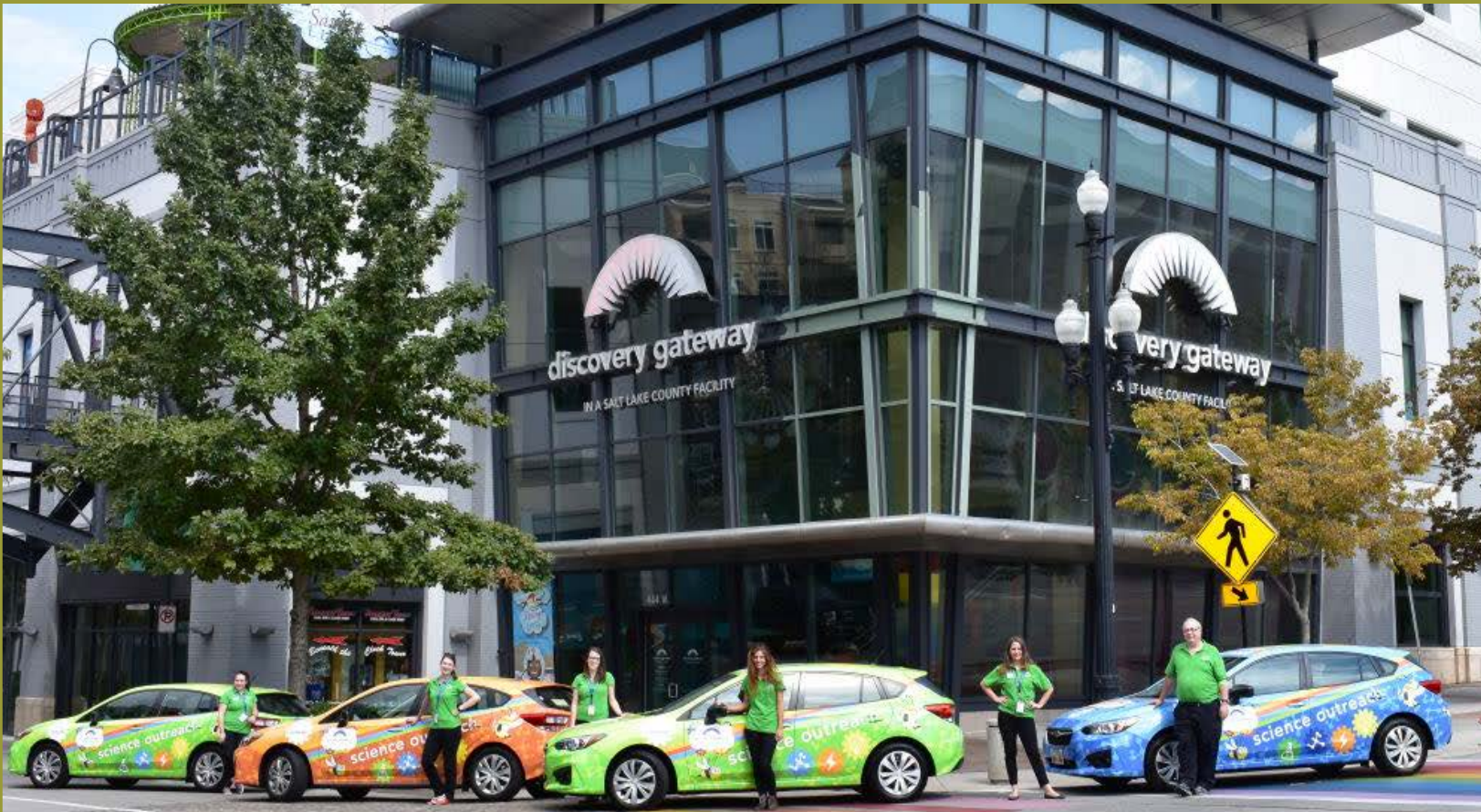
The UTA Transit Exhibit opened in April 2026, a collaboration with Utah Transit Authority that invites kids to step into the driver's seat of a real bus, learn how public transportation connects communities, and explore careers in the field. Built using real repurposed bus components, the exhibit connects children to the world of public transit through hands-on experience, reflecting the Children's Museum's broader commitment to playful, purposeful learning. The exhibit received media coverage from KUTV Fresh Living, ABC4 Utah, FOX 13, and PBS Utah, bringing the museum's mission to audiences across the state.

Marathon Petroleum became the sponsor of the Water Play exhibit this year. As with the UTA Transit Exhibit, this work reflects continued progress on projects funded through last year's corporate partnerships, now being executed in FY26.

Looking ahead, the Children's Museum is excited to begin work on an exhibit developed in partnership with Intermountain Health, focused on children's mental health and wellness. Alongside the new children's rooftop garden experience, this exhibit will serve as the centerpiece of our work in FY27, reflecting our deepest belief that children thrive when they feel seen, supported, and inspired.



UTA Exhibit Opening Event



STEAM Education

For almost 50 years, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum has been serving the needs of our community through exhibits, educational programming, and outreach. By maintaining a focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) it has kept its exhibits and programming relevant and engaging. Building on this history, it will continue to expand its offerings through new exhibits, in-house programming, and outreach education as well as offering fee-based and grant-funded programming.

Young children and their families represent the museum's core audience. As new exhibits and programs are added, DGCM's goal will be to offer a clear STEAM focus to provide layers of rich content. DGCM will serve its core audience, and also strategically expand its offerings to include older children. This strategy enables the museum to serve larger families with multiple-age children and expand its demographic to achieve attendance growth while still serving its core audience.

Education Outreach Goals

The education department has made DGCM an integral part of the community by visiting every school district within the state, facilitating on-site programs, and presenting at community events, bringing science to tens of thousands of children.

Outreach Programs

With the help of the Informal Science Education Enhancement (iSEE) funding, DGCM is able to bring engaging science experiences to Utah's public and charter school classrooms through its fifth-grade chemistry outreach program, Reaction Time, and kindergarten physics outreach program, Potential Energy. Throughout the year, DGCM visited 614 schools across all 41 Utah school districts, reaching 62,344 children and 4,580 teachers. All outreach programs work in collaboration with the iSEE group, which is comprised of 11 educational organizations and the USBE. Outreach funding was provided by iSEE (\$309,596).

Community Outreach Events

This year, DGCM also strengthened ties to the educational community by participating in Nonprofit Day on the Hill, networking with elected officials and fellow nonprofits; SHERoes in STEM Community Partners Night, celebrating women in STEM; the Special Olympics Utah Health & Wellness Fair, serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families; Salt Lake Sideways, celebrating Salt Lake City's small business community; and Party for the Planet, an Earth Day celebration. The outreach team also delivered STEM Nights at 15 schools throughout the year.



Mural in the museum's theater

Education Outreach Goals

Teacher Professional Development

The outreach staff offered professional development workshops for fifth-grade teachers and kindergarten teachers through two programs, Chain Reaction and Energy Transfer, that complement the programs taught in schools. In total, 4 workshops were offered, with 19 teachers in attendance.

Afterschool Program

The Children's Museum provides an afterschool program with five Title I Salt Lake City district schools. The afterschool manager visited each week, facilitating 46 visits and reaching 487 children and 56 educators throughout the school year.

Field Trips

During the 2025-2026 school year, the Children's Museum hosted 361 field trips, providing core-based programming for 18,006 students across 28 districts. Of these, 237 were free trips provided to public and charter school groups in Utah and funded through our iSEE Program.

Summer Camps

The Children's Museum hosted 11 STEAM-focused Summer Camps, serving children ages 5-10, reaching approximately 133 children.



Children studying feathers during a wildlife education program



Research & Evaluation

Discovery Gateway Children's Museum has made intentional efforts this past year to research and collect data on its programming, outreach, and in-house offerings. The data yielded from these efforts have been vital in refining marketing efforts, fundraising initiatives, and community collaborations with the end goal of always improving visitor experiences.

The Children's Museum is excited to bring real art and artifacts into an immersive and hands-on children's museum environment through our paleontology exhibit and art murals dispersed throughout the museum. According to our research, the Children's Museum is pioneering the pursuit to combine interactive learning coupled with fossils, artifacts, and real art. The ultimate goal is to create the next generation of museum visitors, by offering a fun and accessible gateway to offerings typically found in other museums such as natural history, art, and science museums.



Research & Evaluation

Taskforces

The museum convenes cross-stakeholder taskforces, bringing together board members, Young Professionals Board members, museum members, staff, influencers, and leadership from our Museum Inclusion Fund partners, to shape major initiatives. This year's taskforces included Brand Identity and the Children's Garden Exhibit.

Surveys

Visitor surveys were developed and implemented for use through iPads and QR codes, to better understand visitor's perspectives on programming, outreach experiences, and exhibits. This information will help the museum to continue to make incremental improvements in our offerings. Information and demographics collected will be used to seek additional funding from grants.

Under the leadership of the DEIA Taskforce, surveys were implemented to obtain information on the demographics of the board, employees, and visitors.



Multicultural Inclusion

DGCM's strategic planning session clearly showed that its staff and board members remain committed to the children's museum being an inclusive and diverse community resource. The executive team strives to ensure that its board, staff, and programming reflect the community's diversity and that its culture feels welcoming and inclusive.

DGCM will continue developing relationships with partners representing the diverse communities in Salt Lake City. DGCM also recognizes barriers that may prevent visitation and seeks to create greater equitable access to the museum.

DGCM will analyze the demographic data from its board of directors, staff, and visitors, to acquire a statistical baseline of the key players involved in the museum so that it can create accurate reports based on real data.

DGCM will continue to celebrate its diverse community through various celebrations during the year. A minimum of 90% of its events will be developed in collaboration with our community partners.

Multicultural Inclusion

Diversification

DDGCM strives to represent the community and has made strides in diversifying its board members. The current board is comprised of over 60% women and 25% of its members are from culturally diverse backgrounds. The museum staff is 70% female, and 25% of the team is from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Partnerships & Events

This year, we welcomed two new nonprofit partners, Guadalupe Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters, into our Museum Inclusion Fund program, bringing our total to sixteen partner organizations. This expanded network reduces barriers to entry for families facing every kind of circumstance, made possible through the continued generosity of our corporate and foundation supporters.



Father and daughter craft together in the Art Studio.

Partnerships & Events

Discovery Gateway Children's Museum held four Medallion Day events this year, made possible by generous donations to the Museum Inclusion Fund. Families from the Children's Museum's sixteen Medallion Partner organizations were invited to attend, with free admission and free parking. 1,056 guests attended and enjoyed performances, along with free lunch donated through Sizzling Platter's Lend-A-Hand Program.

The Children's Museum also held its annual World Connections Festival, celebrating the diverse cultures from around the world that call Utah home. Partner organizations were invited to participate and showcase their talents, including Robb Little Owl Martin, Ngoma y'Africa Cultural Center, Ballet Folklórico Sabor Latino, and Kenshin Taiko.

The Children's Museum continues to represent our community by increasing access for children of all backgrounds and abilities. This year, the Children's Museum received a \$10,000 donation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation, funding our Sensory Inclusive Afternoons. For the past three years, the Children's Museum has offered Sensory Inclusive Sessions on Monday afternoons and Sunday mornings, turning off the music, lowering the lighting, and providing sensory kits to create a comfortable, welcoming environment for individuals with sensory needs. This year, 1,032 individuals registered and participated in these sessions.

This year also brought real momentum to the Children's Museum's Rooftop Greenhouse Exhibit, set to become the largest children's rooftop garden in the United States. The project has been embraced by some of Utah's most respected institutions, with founding support from PNC Bank, Fidelity Investments, the Marriner Eccles Foundation, the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, and Enbridge Gas Utah, alongside pro bono construction from Big D Construction and architectural design from AMD Architecture. Together, these partners have helped the Children's Museum raise over \$344,000 toward this \$1,000,000 project.



Children's Rooftop Garden Exhibit rendering

discovery gateway
children's museum

444 West 100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
www.discoverygateway.org