Welcome to ECHO

ECHO encourages visitors to view the natural environment as part of their neighborhood and to explore, learn about, and consider opportunities for stewardship. This work is delivered by a dedicated team of 25 staff; 175 volunteers and interns, who serve more than over 15,000 volunteer hours annually; and 40 community and social service partners.

Our Mission: ECHO educates and delights people about the Ecology, Culture, History, and Opportunities for Stewardship of the Lake Champlain Basin.

Dear Friends,

During a recent event, I was asked what I like best about working at ECHO. I hear this question often and the same answer comes to mind each time: “The people!” ECHO’s staff, volunteers, and interns are passionate people and for good reason: working at ECHO is a transformative and energizing experience.

Each time I watch a school group or a new American mom and her child discover Champ Lane or the Butterfly Pavilion for the first time, I feel this place vibrating with energy and inspiration. I am reminded that ECHO is a catalyst for learning. Our animal care specialists, volunteers, and education staff all believe deeply that education is a necessity—not a nicety. Every one of our team members makes a personal investment in his or her own way, aiming to provide families with the resources and programs necessary to meet the growing and diverse needs of our community.

At its heart, ECHO inspires. Through our live animals and engineering challenges, through our vacation camps, school visits and community events, and through the passion we bring to every learning moment, every guest, every animal in our care, we bring our community together. Building science knowledge, caring for the environment and instilling a devotion to lifelong learning comprise the core of the ECHO experience.

Our annual report entitled “A Day in the Life” has been designed to showcase data, images, and the people that dedicate themselves each day to our mission. We hope as you review these pages you see reflected the contributions ECHO makes to our greater community and that find something new and inspiring.

Whether you are a member, partner, donor or friend, thank you for investing in ECHO and for believing in the people who serve to inspire the next generation of thoughtful citizens and community leaders. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our community. Thank you for the contributions that make it all possible.

Phelan R. Fretz Ph.D.
Executive Director
5:00 am
Jeremy & facilities team ready the building
Our facilities staff start early to prepare everything from the book nook in Champ Lane to the 46 pumps, water coolers, and boilers that power our tanks.

5:55 am
Animal care staff guide college interns in career focused skills
Staff instruct interns as they dive in every morning, 365 days a year, checking every animal and habitat—from Homer the snapping turtle to the sturgeon—and helping to provide state of the art animal husbandry for all of ECHO’s reptiles, amphibians, and fish.

7:23 am
Jenn cleans the sturgeon tank

Providing career relevant experience
Annually, 100+ student interns attending The University of Vermont, Champlain College, Saint Michael’s College, and regional middle and high schools gain hands-on experience while working alongside our staff.

Saving threatened turtles—500 and growing
This year, ECHO celebrated the 10th anniversary of partnering with Vermont Fish and Wildlife in the Spiny Softshell Turtle Headstart program. Each year, neonate turtles overwinter at ECHO and are released back into the wild in June.
Elizabeth welcomes Early Learning Readiness families

ECHO partners with the Burlington YMCA to provide a twice weekly school-readiness program for low-resource and new American preschoolers and their caregivers. The program is now in its 5th year.

9:25 am
Nina hands out theater programs

In partnership with the Very Merry Theatre, ECHO supports a dozen K-8th grade classrooms to write and perform original short plays on a watershed topic.

10:08 am
Noella greets school groups

Education staff host teacher trainings and education programs for over 82 schools and 10,000 students.

Addressing community needs
ECHO’s Early Science Learning Initiative reaches more than 1,500 early learners and 100 educators each year through supporting partnerships with King Street Youth Center, Burlington Children’s Space, the YMCA preschool network, and other early learning providers.

“Because of the Early Science Learning Program…. All of our families, both privileged and under-resourced, are more likely to take advantage of a resource in our community and foster the growth of scientific exploration, thinking, and problem-solving. A win-win for all.”

STACY WEINBERGER, EARLY EDUCATION DIRECTOR, KING STREET CENTER
10:46 am
Chris builds a ROV with high school students

Supported by meaningful partnerships, like Greensea Systems in Richmond, Vermont, ECHO provides high-impact science-based learning experiences in and outside our walls.

“UVM Physics values ECHO’s role in our community and the incredible forum it provides for training developing scientists in the vital skill of communicating science.”

DAVID HAMMOND AND LUKE DONFORTH, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

11:17 am
Barry facilitates the Leahy Environmental Summit committee meeting

ECHO convenes the two-day Summit biennially, establishing Vermont as a leader in building sustained, multi-sector, watershed-level initiatives that build resilience and create a culture of clean water.

12:04 pm
Cailee teaches the art of live education demos

Paid internships provide graduate and undergraduate students practical experience teaching visitors of all ages.

Leveraging the power of 100 stakeholders

ECHO serves as the backbone for The Vermont Clean Water Network—a collection of 100 local and state agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, farms, and communities of faith that advocate for clean water.
1:00 pm
Shannon delivers animal demonstrations
Animal care staff deliver 750 programs focused on the lake’s native wildlife and its conservation.

2:12 pm
Nina preps for NBC5 filming
ECHO believes that science literacy leads to good citizenship. By supporting the work of community partners like Let’s Grow Kids and UVM Herpetologists, ECHO connects a wider audience to science topics.

Promoting early science learning
In partnership with Let’s Grow Kids, ECHO launched Champ Lane as part of the museum’s Early Science Initiative. This permanent exhibit further positions ECHO as a key resource for early learning by creating high-quality curricula, materials, and training opportunities to support early science readiness across the state of Vermont.

Supporting local teachers and strengthening schools
This year, ECHO expanded its outreach programs to include professional development opportunities for teachers in support of student personalized learning pathways to graduation.

39,942 plastic fruit and vegetables from the Champ Lane farmers market washed.

TOM HAS MADE 29 SHOWS THIS YEAR COVERING TECHNOLOGY, CLIMATE CHANGE, EXPLOSIVE CHEMISTRY, EARLY LEARNING, BRAIN SCIENCE, AND EVEN BASIC CIRCUITRY.

12:34 pm
Champ Lane exhibit fills up with little scientists
3:30 pm
Alida guides floor activities
Ranging from 14 to 87 years young, volunteers recognize ECHO as a place where lifelong learning is reinforced daily and as a welcoming place for all ages to serve their community.

5:15 pm
Elijah runs the Touch Tank during Community Science Night
Celebrating its 10th anniversary, ECHO’s teen leadership program inspires students to directly engage the public in science related activities. Teens receive valuable science content knowledge, job skills, and leadership experience.

4:45 pm
Education staff get campers ready for pick-up

Transforming lives through collaborations
Annually, ECHO’s teen leadership program hosts Community Science Night, an evening for kids and their Mobius mentors. This year’s event featured a scavenger hunt inviting guests into the “Butterflies, Live!” exhibit, showcased the Champlain Sea Tank, and challenged mentors and mentees to save turtles through an engineering design challenge.

Building new skills within our adult community
Working with the Howard Center, Reach Up, Department of Labor, Transitional Services, and Vermont Associates, ECHO provides individuals making mid or late career changes with opportunities for practical experience and skill development.

1,640 hours served by teen leadership team members
16,665 hours served by volunteers
48,402 goldfish consumed by camp and overnight participants
1,540 hours served by teen leadership team members
16,665 hours served by volunteers
1,540 hours served by teen leadership team members
16,665 hours served by volunteers
5:55 pm
ECHO serves as a community resource for 2,173 people celebrating MLK Day
This annual, free public day helps community members reflect on the social justice legacy of Dr. King and explore issues of diversity and inclusion through story, song, and conversation.

8:17 pm
Travis loads upgrades to the Northfield Savings Bank Theater
ECHO invites guests of all ages and abilities to explore the wider world through our rotating selection of National Geographic 3D films.

8:45 pm
ECHO is now quiet
In a few hours, our doors will open again to a new day of science discovery.

Growing our Open Door access program
ECHO strives to be accessible to all by breaking down financial, geographic, and cultural barriers. By working with an extensive network of more than 40 social service partners, we reach out to low-resourced families, new Americans, and underserved residents.

Open Door At-A-Glance
23,352 GUESTS received free or significantly reduced admission
2,978 PEOPLE used the library passes distributed to 575 libraries statewide
2,026 FAMILIES utilized the free membership and $2 passes distributed through 40 social service agencies
9,759 STUDENTS visited from schools, preschools, and recreation programs
441 MILITARY FAMILIES welcomed through our participation in the Blue Star free admission program
2,173 PEOPLE visited during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event
Designing the Future We Need

One of our primary objectives is to bring people together from different backgrounds around shared learning, cultural, and environmental experiences. As an open, inclusive, collaborative, and fun space we directly support social innovation.

Leading the 2017 Leahy Environmental Summit

“Simply put, the Champlain watershed is our region’s most precious resource,” stated Thomas Leavitt, President & CEO of Northfield Savings Bank, the Summit’s underwriting sponsor. “With the stewardship of Senator Leahy and ECHO, we have an opportunity to bring together the finest thought leaders to tackle the most formidable challenges.”

Bridging Social Capital

We take our role as a community hub seriously. ECHO is an active member in Burlington’s Diversity & Equity Initiative: We All Belong, now in its seventh year. Among our core goals are to build social capital by forging unexpected connections between diverse collaborators and audience members, to bring people together across differences, and to build a more cohesive community.
Dear Friends,

As we approach our 15th anniversary year, I am struck by the tangible and compelling progress this science center has made in fulfilling its mission and vision. This success is a result of not only the superb quality of people who work and volunteer here, our Board of Directors, our community partners, and the many friends who have entrusted us with their gifts and support but how well they all work together. ECHO is a community in every good sense of the word. And this report celebrates the work of those people. It is through the generosity of this community of partners, volunteers, donors, and friends, that we have been able to continually invest in the experience and opportunities we provide our guests. For that, we are forever humbled by your support. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Timothy R. Volk
Chair, Board of Directors

Financials

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<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>FY 2017*</th>
<th>FY 2016*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and Grants</td>
<td>$1,259,348</td>
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<td>Admissions</td>
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<td>Program Fees</td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>Exhibits and Programs</td>
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<td>Animal Care and Facilities</td>
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<td>Visitor Services</td>
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<td>General and Administration</td>
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<td>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</td>
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ENDOWMENT INVESTMENTS AT MARKET VALUE

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<td>Beginning balance</td>
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<td>Net Contributions</td>
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<td>Funds Transferred from Endowment to Support Operations</td>
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<td>Net Unrealized/Realized Gains (Losses)</td>
<td>465,188</td>
<td>(295,397)</td>
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<td>TOTAL ENDOWMENT INVESTMENTS</td>
<td>$5,629,954</td>
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* PRELIMINARY, UNAUDITED RESULTS. ECHO’S FISCAL YEAR ENDS ON MARCH 31

FISCAL YEAR 2017 INCOME*

- Admissions 36%
- Gifts and Grants 38%
- Memberships 10%
- Function Rentals 8%
- Program Fees 3%
- Annual Fund 5%
- Environmental Summit and VT Clean Water Network 6%
- Visitor Services 17%
- Animal Care and Facilities 22%
- General and Administration 13%
- Fundraising 9%
- Exhibits and Programs 31%

* PRELIMINARY, UNAUDITED RESULTS

FISCAL YEAR 2017 BOARD MEMBERS

Steven Arms
Kristin Carlson
Kyle Dodson
Caralyn Dryer
Britany Gibbs
William Gottesman
Thomas Leavitt
Thomas A. Little
Cate MacLachlan
Elizabeth Miller
Julie Moore
Sarah Muykens
Paul Plunkett
David Raphael
Scott Rossborough
Mark Saba
Paul R. Sisson
Tim Volk
Clare Wool

Advisors
Brian Dunkiel
Tom Berry

Executive Director
Phelan R. Fretz

BOARD EMERITI

Founder
George Little
Mary S. Abele
Grill Anderson
Robert Bauchard
Scott D. Carpenter
Jane Clifford
John Cohn
Timothy C. Davis
Ian V. deGroot
Barry Doolan
David Ely
John T. Ewing
David Finney
Daniel J. Feeney
Traci Griffith
Buzz Hoerr
Scott Johnstone
Rayburn Lavigne
Rosanne Leopold
Alien Lockwood
Lois McClure
Peter Meyer
Billie Miles
Doug Neddie
Jane Nesbitt
Jessica Oski
Kenneth Palm
Barbara Perry
Nancy K. Port
Liz Robert
Betsy Rosenbluth
Lisa Schamborg
George V. Starbuck
Larry Walsh
Mary Watson
Alec Webb
Miro Weinberger