



ANNUAL REPORT



2014



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It is a challenging time for the field of environmental education. No longer is it enough for environmental centers to help people learn about the natural world and the ecological systems that support life. The potentially devastating consequences of humans' actions on the environment make it urgent for educators to seek out new approaches. These must be aimed at helping people understand the natural and human communities in which they live, their interconnection and interdependence, and the fact that we all have the ability to make contributions to change.

The Hitchcock Center meets this challenge each and every day, as you will soon read in the pages of this Annual Report. Over our 53-year history, we have built on our successful teaching practices and a growing awareness that, as citizens, we need to think about the world in an integrated way in order to promote greater environmental integrity, economic prosperity and social equity.

This past fiscal year has been an extremely busy one with continued growth in almost all areas of the Hitchcock Center. Words cannot express my deep-felt gratitude to all the hard-working staff, board and volunteers that make the Hitchcock Center such a unique and innovative place for environmental learning.

I would also be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the hundreds upon hundreds of people, businesses, organizations and agencies who have given us monetary and in-kind support to keep our organization a strong and recognized leader in environmental education.

With my best regards,

Julie Johnson, Executive Director

Special thanks goes to the Town of Amherst and to the following business partners whose generous support at the sustaining level ensured high quality environmental education for our community in FY14:

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525 South Pleasant Street
Amherst, MA 01002
413-256-6006
Hours: Tuesday–Friday
9:00 AM–4:00 PM
hitchcockcenter.org

*“Our intern program equips people with
the skills needed to promote a healthier
planet through environmental education.”*

—Colleen Kelley, education director
and intern program coordinator



ENVENESS

one



Hitchcock at a Glance

The Hitchcock Center's mission is to foster a greater awareness and understanding of the environment and to develop environmentally literate citizens.

OUR FY14 IMPACT

8,994 total children, youth, and adults participated in 349 unique programs offered throughout western Massachusetts and beyond:

- 6,012** K-12 student participants gained greater scientific understanding through standards-based, interdisciplinary programs focused on the local environment and real-world challenges.
- 1,084** Children, youth, and family participants joined in hands-on science and nature discovery programs designed to engage the whole child and family in greater connection and commitment to the natural world.
- 325** Professional development participants were trained in new curriculum and methods to strengthen the integration of science, ecology and environmental sustainability topics into their daily curricula.
- 1,127** Adult participants gained skills and knowledge through natural history, citizen science, and sustainability programs.
- 86** Schools, colleges, and organizations were assisted or partnered with the Hitchcock Center to promote regional environmental literacy and sustainability.
- 30%** Low-income participants were supported through scholarships, subsidies, business sponsorship and grants to keep our environmental education programs at low- or no-cost.
- 288** Volunteers contributed over 2,300 hours to Hitchcock programs and operations.

FY14 Communities Served

Hampshire County: 68%

Hampden County: 17%

Franklin County: 15%

Other: <1%

Numbers on the map reflect the K-12 schools served within each community. Towns without numbers indicate program participation.



Other Massachusetts Counties Served:

Berkshire
Middlesex
Norfolk
Suffolk
Worcester

Other States:

Connecticut
Georgia
New York
North Carolina
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Vermont
Virginia

Other Countries or Regions:

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Italy
Japan



Our Work

Our values are centered on six fundamental aspects of environmental education: teaching principles of ecology; place-based learning; knowing the whole story; promoting resilient communities; demonstrating sustainability in the built environment; and educating for active citizenship. FY14 highlights include:

Naturalist-in-Residence Program Extends Learning in the Outdoors

Thanks to strong funding support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Hitchcock Center completed school residencies that served 15 schools, 81 classrooms and 1,661 students from Granby, Heath, Leeds, Holyoke, East Longmeadow, Northampton, Sunderland, Whately, Deerfield, Conway and Florence. Our residency programs partner a skilled Hitchcock naturalist with schools to help restructure curricula to promote longer-term study of local places, solve environmental issues, and use natural areas close to schools for outdoor-oriented, project- and place-based learning.

"Mr. Ted Watt, our class really appreciates your teaching us all this information ... Personally, I do not like animals but you taught our class so well I wanted to learn more about animals and nature. Hope you come back soon."

—Third grader, Leeds Elementary School,
Leeds, MA

The Plight of Honeybees: An Educational Priority

The Larch Hill Collaborative elevated the plight of honeybees as an educational priority with its member organizations, Hitchcock Center, Common School and the Bramble Hill Farm, coming together to jointly plan and implement a series of yearlong programs and events that engaged over 350 children and their families in activities to help promote greater awareness and advocacy on behalf of honeybees. This included a letter writing campaign asking local legislators, pesticide companies, and farmers to replace hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives.

A New Lens on Science Learning

There is no doubt that science—and, therefore, science education—is central to the lives of all Americans. Hitchcock educators in partnership with the New England Environmental Education Alliance have developed new curricula designed to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Classroom-ready units are now available free of charge on the Center's website and include: "The Pond Ecosystem," "Energy is Electrifying!," "The Hydrosphere, Water, and How We Use It." The "Energy is Electrifying!" curriculum was presented at the **National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Conference** in Boston on April 4, 2014 to over 75 teachers from across the country. The curriculum was further piloted with 20 teachers and 450 of their students, thanks to a grant from the Frances R. Dewing Foundation.

"Thank you for showing us the wonders of nature. My favorite part was hiking up and over the hills to find animal tracks trailing along. What really caught my eye was a bunny scrambling through the snow. Who could forget about the skulls? Handling real skulls to find out if it was a herbivore, carnivore or both."

—Third grader, "Predators and Prey" field trip,
Westhampton Elementary School, MA

School Field Trips Engage Students in Memorable Outdoor Experiences

The Center's popular inquiry-based field trip program continues to grow with over 2,000 elementary school students participating in over 98 field trips including: "Life in a Pond," "Mountains and Valleys," "Insect Investigations," "Habitat Studies," and "Forest Ecology." In FY14, a new "Bird Migration" field trip helped students learn about blue bird habitat requirements, habitat loss, and how habitats and nesting places can be created to support the birds. Some students were even able to view young bluebirds fledging from nesting boxes at Bramble Hill Farm!

New Phenology Club Study Launched

The Hitchcock Center organized its first Phenology Study Club with 18 adults meeting monthly to study different topics including: bird migration, spring wildflowers, bog ecology, mushrooms, vernal pools and more. The purpose of this club is to gather and record data to document how specific local habitats and ecosystems are adjusting to climate change over time.

"Our fifth graders had a wonderful time doing hands-on, inquiry based science and are all excited about learning more! The Hitchcock Center's Energy Literacy unit is fantastic and led to some really meaningful conversations about energy and the environment. I am so glad that I was able to attend the workshop for teachers last fall. Thanks again for everything! I look forward to working with you again in the future."

—Kristin Pisano, fifth grade teacher,
Selser School, Chicopee, MA

How to Talk About Climate Change

It's hard enough to talk about climate change with adults—how do we navigate this conversation with our children? Hitchcock responded by organizing two discussion groups with parents, grandparents, caregivers and educators to help them explore developmentally appropriate ways to introduce the complex causes and challenges of climate change. Addressing climate change, its consequences and its solutions, is not only a program priority for the Center—it is a priority for all aspects of the organization from supply ordering to facility planning.

Mickey Novak Receives Hitchcock's 2014 Heroes for a Healthy Planet Award

Mickey Novak was honored with the 2014 Heroes for a Healthy Planet award at the Hitchcock Center's annual Salamander Sunday Brunch on Sunday, March 30, 2014. Novak received the 2014 award for his decades of tireless dedication to environmental education and conservation of aquatic life as project leader of the Richard Cronin National Salmon Station.

Thank you Mickey! It's been a joy to work with you.

Earth Matters Column Enters 5th Year

A total of 27 "Earth Matters" columns were published in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* on a wide range of natural history, sustainability, and ecological topics reaching over 16,000 households per publication. Special thanks goes to our editorial team headed up by Michael Dover, Katie Koerten and Caroline Hanna. Visit our website to view all published columns.



Intern Profile: Josia Gertz DeChiara

Many years ago, Josia Gertz DeChiara was a summer camper at the Hitchcock Center, climbing trees and playing in mud puddles. Her fascination with the magical inner workings of plants drew her to study molecular ecology at Hampshire College. It was only natural that Josia joined Hitchcock Center as a college intern in the Fall of 2013 as a classroom aide working with children in our "Nature Play Afterschool," "Nature Discovery Preschool," and "Hitchcock Homeschool" programs.



five

CTIVE

Our Volunteers

Volunteers are a foundation of support for our staff and programs. Nearly 300 volunteers contributed over 2,300 hours of service to the Center in FY14. Our volunteers greet our visitors, weed and maintain gardens, prepare crafts and materials for programs, field questions and register program participants, care for our teaching animals, and complete maintenance tasks in our building.

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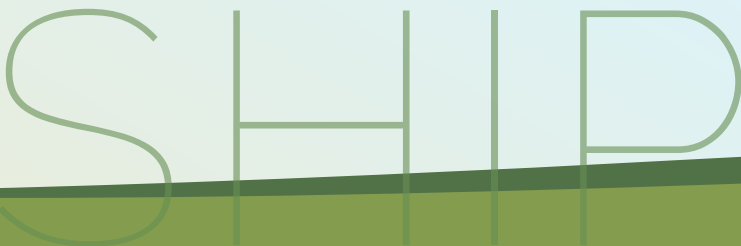
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Sarah Goff	& Patricia Appelbaum	Sam & Thelma Killings	Anne Lombard	& Mary Ellen Kelly	& Scott Przystas
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Louise Reilly
Susan & Eduardo Reyes
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& Michael Perusse
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Alexandra Risley
Schroeder
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.....
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Amherst College Dorms
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Collective Copies
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Nancy Goodman
Carol Gross
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Warner Farm

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In Memory Of

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Gary Beluzo
Ethel DuBois

Louisa Horuati

Michael Megerdichian

Edith Minear

Richard Proctor
Otto Stein

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In Honor Of

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for Training & Development
Rebecca Miller & Tom Randall
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Training & Development

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Special thanks to our Business Partners, whose contributions to our Annual Fund support strengthened environmental education for all ages.

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Source

Appalachian Mountain Club
The Frances R. Dewing Foundation
The Kendeda Fund
Massachusetts Cultural Council
The Susan A. & Donald P. Babson
Charitable Foundation
United Way of Hampshire County

Grant Purpose

School field trips
Energy Literacy Project
Unrestricted operating support
Unrestricted operating support
Unrestricted operating support
Children, youth and family programs

SCHOLARSHIP FUND GIFTS

Amherst South
Congregational Church
Sandra & Peter Beak
Cynthia & Jerry Brubaker
Amy Gray

Susan Heitker
& Mathew Jacobson
Janice Jorgensen
Katie Koerten & Matt Valliere
The Pew Charitable Trust
Jennifer & Steve Unkles

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE HITCHCOCK CENTER

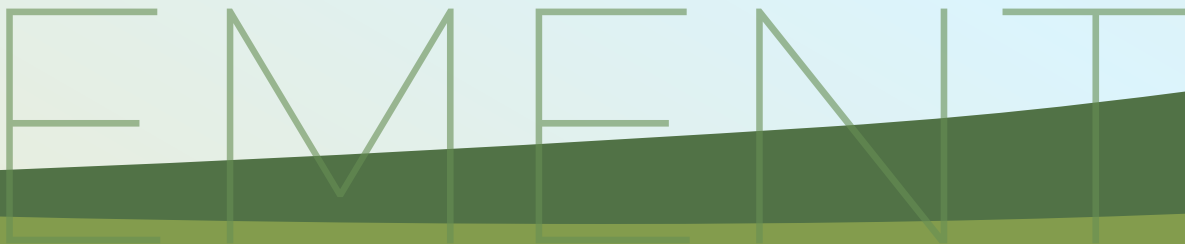
We appreciate all of the donors who have already given to our campaign goal of \$5.8 million. Fundraising for this campaign continues as of the time of this publication. More about our *Building for the Future* project is available on our website.

VALLEY GIVES

Hosted by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Valley Gives is the biggest online giving day for hundreds of nonprofits in Western Massachusetts.

On December 12, 2013, the second year of Valley Gives, 152 donors raised \$20,683 for the Hitchcock Center in just 24 hours. These generous gifts provided vital support for Hitchcock's year-round activities.

Thank you!





FY14 Living Building Project in Review

The Hitchcock Center continues to advance its plans to build New England's first public "living" environmental education center by taking the Living Building Challenge™, the most rigorous standard for sustainable development in the built environment.

Accomplishments in FY14 include:

- Completed design plans for a new 9,000 square foot building that will include: net zero energy and water; rainwater harvesting; composting toilets; building systems that model and mimic nature; a dynamic visitor's center; improved live and natural history exhibits; hands-on indoor and outdoor children's discovery areas; four highly adaptive classrooms and meeting spaces; expanded offices for a growing staff; and demonstration gardens, courtyards, decks, and picnic areas.
- Secured a total of \$1,922,466 in new gifts, grants and pledges. This, combined with previous gifts from prior years, represents a total of \$2,522,816 secured, or 43% of our initial campaign goal of \$5.8M as of the end of FY14 (June 30, 2014).

We appreciate all who have supported our *Building for the Future* campaign. A separate report will be published at the end of our capital campaign to recognize the generous support received by all individuals, foundations, businesses, government and other sources. Thank you.



Financials

REVENUE	FY2014
Contributed support	\$826,793.00
Grant	\$1,270,682.00
Earned revenue	\$222,596.00
Events	\$17,106.00
Other	\$1,108.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,338,195.00*

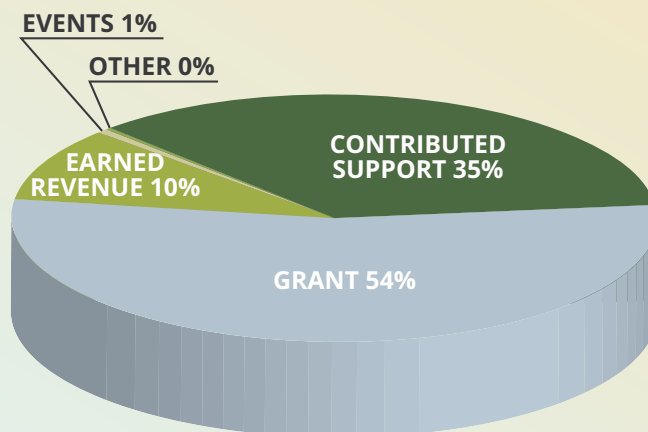
* Of this total, \$1,922,466 was raised for the Living Building Project as of June 30, 2014.

EXPENSES	FY2014
General operations	\$151,644.00
Development	\$59,661.00
Living Building Project	\$194,620.00
Program	\$285,497.00
	<hr/>
	\$691,422.00

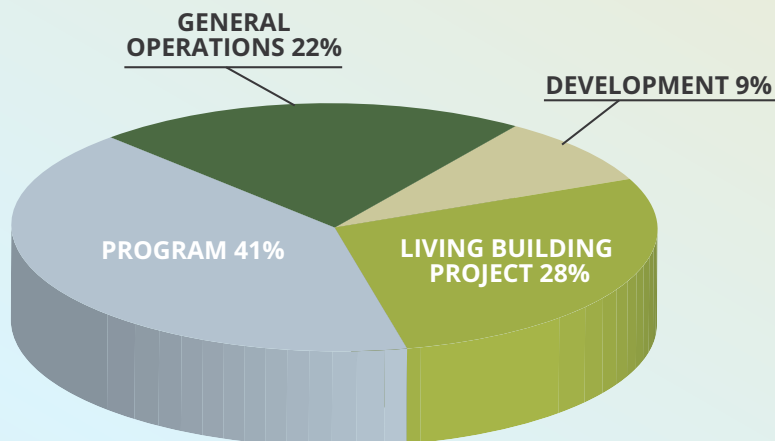
Figures based on audited financial statements for FY14.



FY2014 REVENUE



FY2014 EXPENSES





**Hitchcock Center for the Environment
at Larch Hill Conservation Area**

525 South Pleasant Street
Amherst, MA 01002

413-256-6006

Hours: Tuesday-Friday
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

hitchcockcenter.org



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