



WHERE SCIENCE & PLAY!
INTERSECT!

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



WHY SPI

Growing up in Mount Vernon, I didn't know what to make of the Buckeye Candy building. My parents drove past it without regard while my mind wandered to all those shelves and bins which I imagined to be stocked with...CANDY!

The Science Playspace Initiative (SPI), Inc. welcomed me back to this community in March to serve as its new executive director. I soon discovered that what is now inside that historic building bookending the downtown portion of Main Street is so much better than what my hopeful young self could have conjured all those years ago.

SPI Spot in Kenyon College's Wright Center is filled with JOY and WONDER! With toys, and tools, and whimsical hidey holes and loving families who explore these together.

Here, kids practice social skills and develop science mindsets organically through play and parents enjoy a retreat from the routines of home. College students explore their interest in becoming teachers. Families who are going through challenging life events reconnect at SPI to make positive memories (thanks to a partnership with Knox County Job & Family Services).

Grandparents watch little ones play in much the same way they did in their own youth; focusing on each other

rather than handheld electronics, using imagination and getting their hands into some self-directed project.

Visitors are drawn to our downtown to check out SPI and then continue on to area businesses for lunch, to buy a book or peruse the local shops.

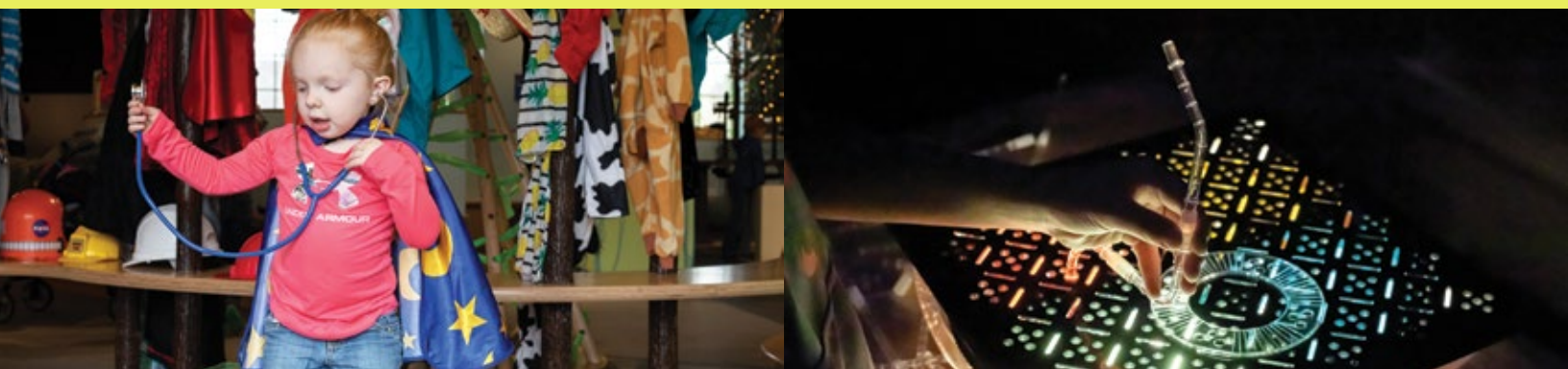
Thanks to the hard work and financial investment of those who established and have supported SPI, we were able this year to add to our space a large tree-themed climbing area. A new engineering installation with exposed gears and chains helps kids understand how machines work and allows them to mix colors.

More and more people have become aware of SPI Spot, and we have seen continued growth in the number of participant-visitors to our core Discovery Play program.

As we transitioned our leadership this year, the staff continued their energetic and positive spirit, sharing good ideas for how our team can improve and take SPI into the future.

Thank you all for your vital role in this! Your investment is sweeter than chocolate.

— STEPHANIE CALONDIS GEIGER
SPI Executive Director



SPI HIGHLIGHTS



Discovery Play at SPI Spot
Outreach & Enrichment



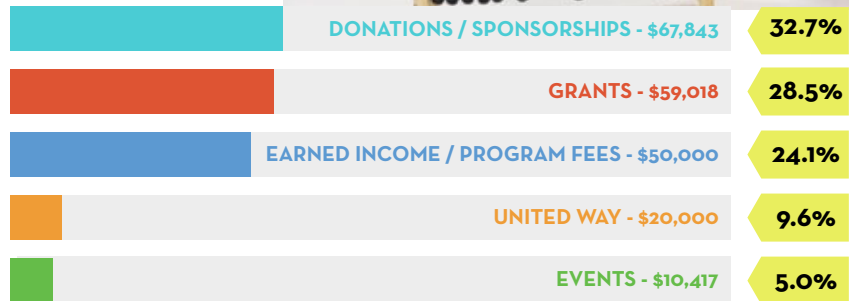
GROWTH

The informal learning that happens at SPI Spot through our core Discovery Play program is complemented by a range of fun opportunities such as summer camps and out-of-school time clubs, plus drop-in activities at area parks and our summer music garden initiative. Partnerships with Kenyon college, other partner organizations, and volunteers enhance this work.

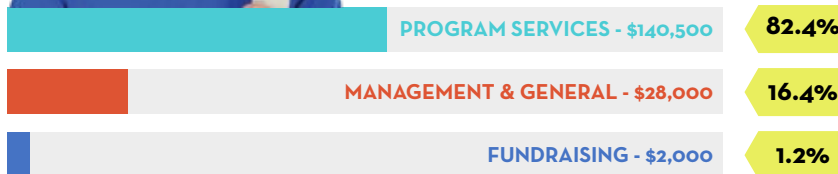


REVENUE

SPI charges much lower admission fees than similar organizations of its kind. Grants and donations continue to be an important part of our budget portfolio enabling this accessibility. These contributed funds help us also subsidize participation through scholarship annual memberships, scholarship camp registrations, and a Museums for All pricing option for those who present their SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefit card.



TOTAL REVENUE: \$207,278



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$170,500*

* In addition, \$63,000 was drawn from the capital campaign fund to pay for exhibits/installations.

EXPENSES

The majority of SPI's spending is for program services, program supplies, and the maintenance of our public gathering space. SPI Spot is staffed seven days per week, open to the public most days for 8.5 hours - with longer evening hours on Thursdays.

A photograph of several children climbing a wooden treehouse climber structure. The structure features vertical wooden posts, horizontal wooden beams, and green handholds. A girl in a blue floral shirt is climbing on the left, a girl in a pink shirt is climbing in the center, and a girl in a blue floral shirt is climbing on the right. A girl in a blue dress is climbing on the far left. A girl with red hair in a blue floral shirt is climbing on the far right. The background is a wall with vertical wooden posts and a green sign with the letters 'RIS' on it.

WHY ISPI

“Knox Community Hospital is a proud supporter of the Science Playspace Initiative and is pleased to partner with them in making experiences like the Treehouse Climber available for our community. We believe it is important that children learn to develop positive habits at a young age, and we know that a big part of healthy living—especially for children—is regular active play. SPI Spot is also that unique and special environment in which families spend time together, strengthening bonds and fostering relational growth and development. We appreciate the opportunity to support SPI and to collaborate on this fun and educational element of its work.”

— **JEFFREY SCOTT**

Director of Marketing and Development,
Knox Community Hospital

“ My family re-located to Mount Vernon almost seven years ago. At that time, we discovered SPI during a First Friday event. Over the next few years, we donated various items to SPI and have stopped in from time to time to offer assistance. Our children (now 18 and 16yrs old) enjoyed stopping in for activities.

I am lucky to work for an organization that supports community volunteer efforts, with our company focus on hunger, education, and health. I am able to volunteer for various events around Columbus and every quarter I am “awarded” dollars to donate to a charity of my choice. That dollar amount corresponds to the number of hours I volunteer; I was happy this year to be able to direct those dollars to your programming efforts. We also have also elected SPI as our charity for our Kroger Rewards account.



SPI left a lasting impression on us. We fully support a creative and fun method of teaching science, and we choose to contribute as much as we can to SPI.

Please continue to keep science fun and relevant!

”

– **SUSAN HENRY**

(Susan, Larry, Matthew and Joy)



Many in Knox County recognize Denise Conway's friendly face and may have consulted with her regarding their medical concerns. Now a successful pharmacist and entrepreneur, her childhood days were spent enjoying the kinds of activities that SPI facilitates and celebrates. She said, “I definitely loved to pretend with my baby dolls or play bank and school or to have tea parties with all my stuffed animals. Along with imaginary play, I liked to be active and hands on. I rode my bike, planted flowers with my mom and with our neighbor learned about proper flowerbed care. We also had a vegetable garden my

whole life growing up. As to science, my father taught us girls about auto care - like how to monitor the level and change the oil change the oil in our cars and how to change tires on our cars.” Denise and her husband Kevin (an Ariel engineer) continue to support SPI for the benefit of the broader community even as their own children have graduated to different interests and are at the age when they may intersect with SPI in different ways. “SPI Spot allows family and children to grow together in education with each other, playing and using their imaginations like I did as a child and as I encouraged my own kids to do,” she said. “Having an outlet like SPI outside of our own homes enables our community to grow, communicate and collaborate together. This is not only where children can make new friends but also where parents can make new friends. It is a location of inspiring the next scientist, engineer, doctor, pharmacist, educator and innovator!”

– **DENISE CONWAY**

R.Ph/Owner, Conway's Pharmacy

DONORS

MISSION PARTNERS

(sustained commitment of \$5000 +)

Ariel Foundation

Karen Wright

The United Way of Knox County

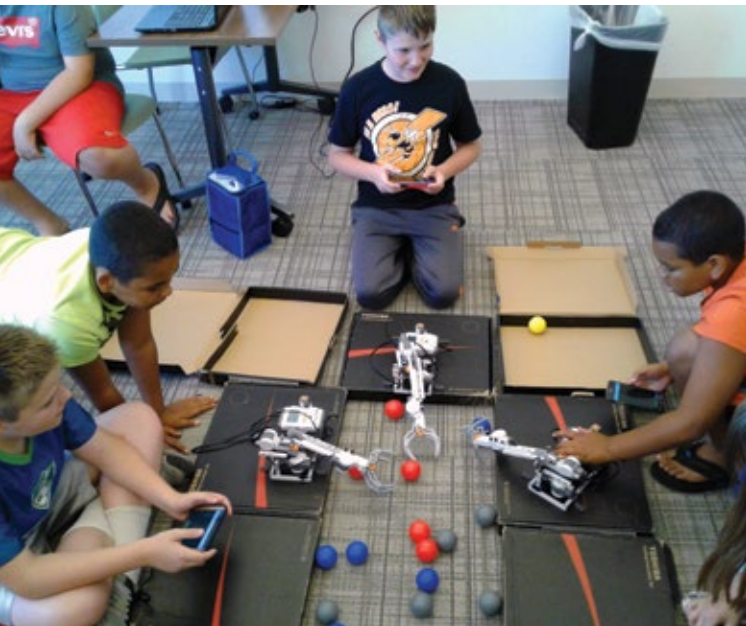
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\$1000 - \$4999

George B. Storer Fund at The Miami Foundation

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Anonymous Visitor(s)



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MISSION

To enhance the
Knox County community
by bringing people
of all ages together
to explore science and
technology through play.

SCIENCE PLAY-SPACE INITIATIVE (SPI)
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Science and **Play** Intersect