



# Science Play-Space Initiative Annual Report - Fiscal Year July 2013-June 2014

# Year in Review

## President's Message

SPI is growing! During the past year we have been able to increase both our operating hours and number of staff. We are now open five days a week, for a total of 39 hours per week, not including our free Open Houses on First Fridays, May through October. In addition to our Executive Director position, we have increased our part-time paid staff from two to four people, one of whose primary responsibility is educational programming. While we have continued to support the Summer Music Garden series and the Dan Emmett Music and Arts Festival, we have expanded our outreach programming across the county by providing hands-on science activities at Riverside and Hiawatha Parks, the Public Library Summer Reading Kick-off in Mount Vernon, Fredericktown, Gambier and Danville, and at other community events such as Ohiolina. We are offering weekly programming for preschool and an after school club for Middle School students. We have received a total of \$20,000 in competitive grants during this year that have allowed much of this to occur. While we have always been members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Heritage Center Association, we are now a Knox County United Way supported organization. Our roots are growing deep in the community!

Like a tree with deepening roots, we are also branching out. SPI is proud to be a member of the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC). When you purchase a yearly membership, you will now find the ASTC logo on your membership card. What will this mean? First, the direct benefit to you as a member is free or reduced admission to over 350 science centers across the country. Any member center over 90 miles away is free, and locally we have a 50% discount agreement with The Works and COSI. Secondly, this nationally recognized professional organization offers SPI a great amount of networking support. Our staff will have access to resources such as publications and conferences that will keep them updated on the latest trends and practices in the industry. And lastly, it establishes us as a bona fide entity!

We are building partnerships with schools to bring quality science experiences to our county in a variety of new and exciting ways! We have entered into a partnership with The Works, COTC, MVNU and Kenyon College to bring STEMfest to Knox County in February, 2015. This problem-solving competition is open to Middle and High School students and provides a showcase for local industry to highlight the types of STEM jobs that are in our community. We are broadening our programming to include the elementary grades. The future of SPI is exciting indeed!

Thank you for your support of SPI this past year! We look forward to many years to come!

## Board and Employees July 2013-June 2014

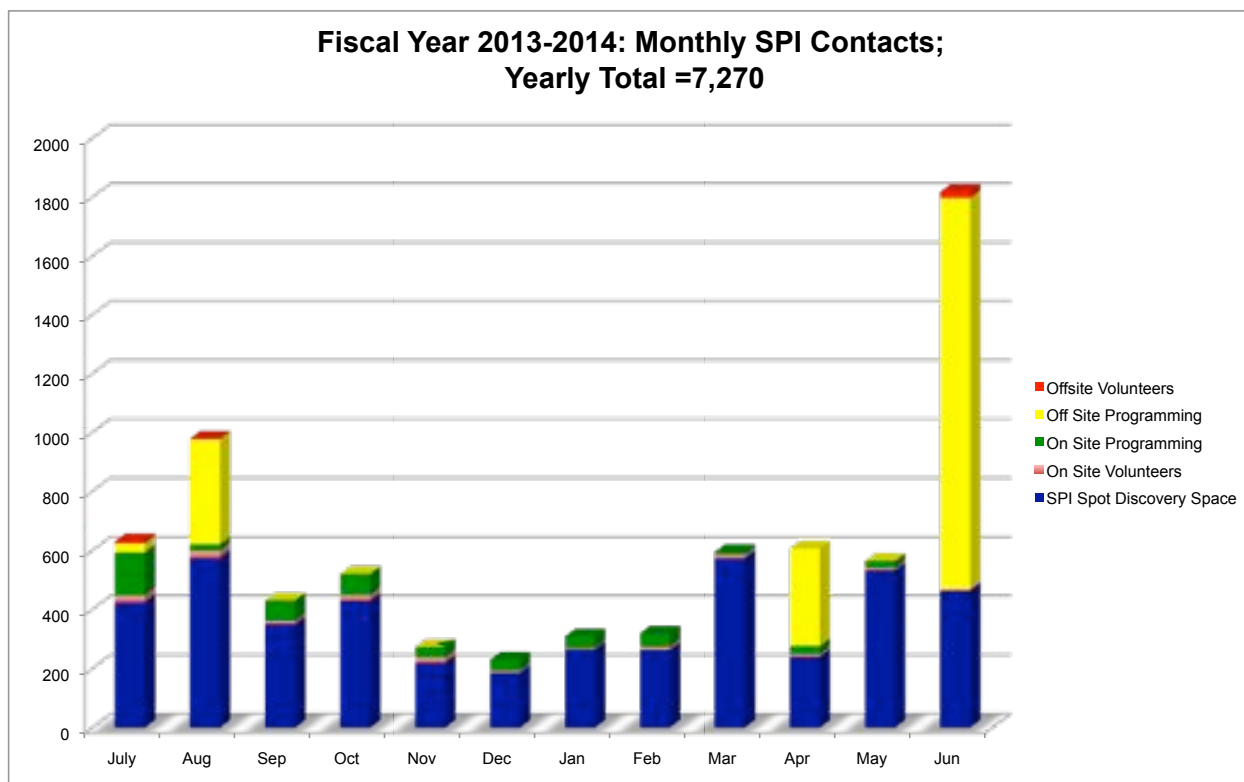
Board Officers	Board Members	Executive Director
Lori A. Beach, Ed.D. - President	Duane Barber	Rachel Garcia
Ann Laudeman - Vice- President outgoing	Meghan Burley Durbin	Employees
Andrea White, Ph.D. - Secretary	Colleen Clarkson	Toni Metcalf (-September 2013)
Grey Glandon, C.P.A. - Treasurer	Sarah Goslee-Reed	Emily Noble(-Aug 2013)
Ruth Sinclair- Vice President - Current		Erika Miller (Jan-May 2013)
	Jan Schild	Erin Bell (May-Aug 2014)
Advisory Board	Ann Laudeman- current	Alaina Mahn (May- Aug 2014)
Brock Schroeder	Debbie Shepherd-Gregg -outgoing	Evelyne Keener October 2013-
Debbie Shephard Greg- current		

## Executive Director's Report

***The mission of the Science Play-Space Initiative (SPI) is to enhance the Knox County community by bringing people of all ages together to explore science and technology through play.***



To carry out this mission, SPI operates SPI Spot and takes part in other community events and programs throughout the year to provide and enhance local play and science exploration opportunities. The number of people taking advantage of our offerings each day, totaled 7,200 in the fiscal year July 2013-June 2014.



### SPI Spot

The 4,200 visitors to SPI Spot discovery space last year came on 1,650 family visits which represented almost 600 different families. These 2013-2014 numbers are almost double from last year. Attendance varied significantly by season with fewer visitors in the cold winter months.

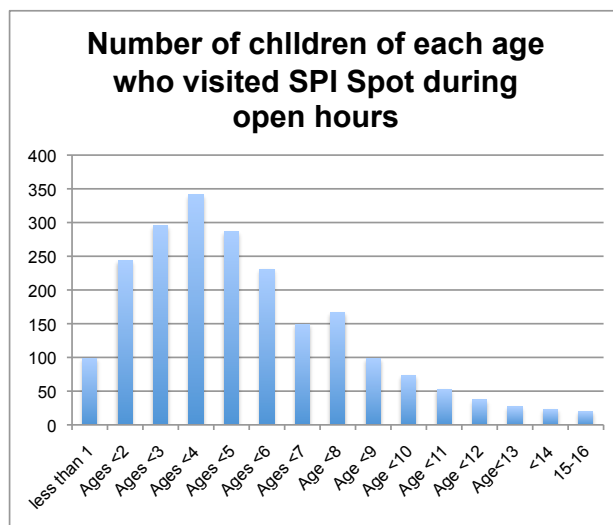
The average age of these visitors was 4.5 years old, the same as last year. Since April, when we began taking more detailed data during our regular open hours, we found that 30% of family visits included grandparents. Another finding was that about three quarters of these family visits are by yearly and monthly members. In our last quarter there were 50 visits from families who had never been to SPI Spot before.

### Field Trips

When SPI is closed to the public, we host groups. We saw an additional 200 visitors on field trips during this fiscal year. The following groups were served: ESC New Hope and ESC Fredericktown Preschools, Dan Emmet Elementary School, East Elementary School, Mount Vernon Seventh Day Adventist School, Twin Oak Elementary School, and Girl Scout troop 519.

### Programming

Weekly preschool activities in our Discovery Space focused on measurement in the fall and various phenomena in the spring.







Our middle school after-school program, Cool Science Investigators (CSI) met 32 weeks during the year and served between 8-23 students each week. The fall 2013 program was subsidized by a grant from NASA, and focused on measuring and observing the universe using a NASA curriculum, and had the greater number of participants. Two eight-week spring modules were on Astrobiology (user fee funded) and NanoScience (subsidized by the Youth Philanthropy grant of the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County). The format for

CSI evolved from directed investigations for one hour in the middle of the two hour meeting to students choosing between a directed activity and self directed activities for the instructional hour of the club.

During the fall, SPI arranged for instruction in Lego Mindstorm Robotics for the two Centerville High School after school program field trips to our space.

During Spring Break, SPI provided special activities in our Discovery Lab each day for elementary aged children. These activities included exploring electrical circuits, the senses, and chemistry with sugar, salt, and eggs.

Outside our space during the school year, SPI appeared at the Rolls Royce Family Day, Earth Day at Kenyon, and Earth and Energy Day in Utica (hosted by The Energy Co-op).

Summer has been a busy time for SPI to bring science outside of our space: SPI was at the Library Summer Reading Kickoff with hands-on science in Gambier, Mount Vernon, Fredericktown, and Danville reaching about 500 children. Activities presented were a liquid nitrogen ice-cream demonstration, “lava” lamps, stomp rockets, and an engineering structural challenge.

Starting in June, SPI brought science activities to Mount Vernon City Parks. We were at Riverside park during free lunch program on Mondays and on Tuesdays we paired up with the Hiawatha Park parks program in the morning. These activities included “magic” worms, “silly putty” and stomp rockets. Every week about 45 children



(ages 2-16) participated in activities at Riverside Park (average age was seven) and about 80 participants at Hiawatha park (ages 4-16, average age was eight). Through this program SPI has contacted children from 145 additional families who have not been to visit our discovery space.

In June, our three one week summer camps served over 100 children and included Camp Invention at Twin Oak Elementary School (full day) and Nature camp in collaboration with the BFEC (Brown Family Environmental Center) (half day).

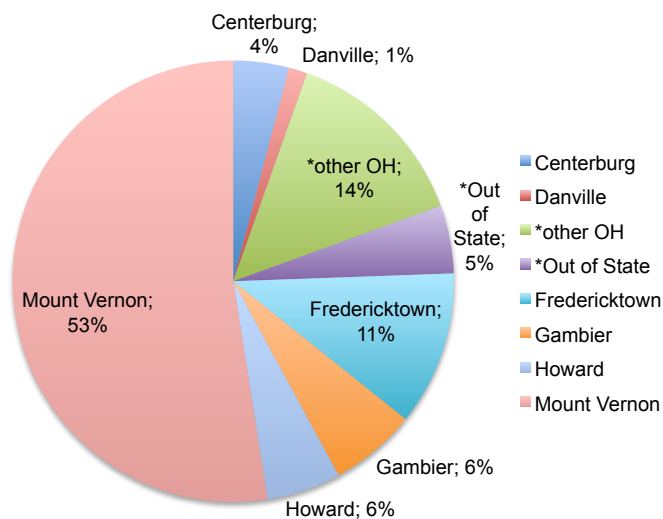
Additionally, SPI also provided science activities at Music in the Garden to approximately 30 children at each concert. In June participants learned about fireflies and crafted their own bugs.

### Visitor Geography

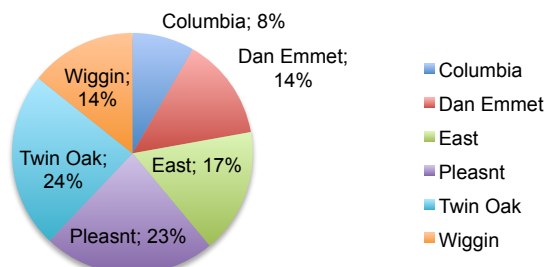
Slightly more than half of visiting families to SPI Spot this year are from Mount Vernon, and all municipalities in Knox county are now represented. Additionally, our participation in the public library summer reading events at their respective locations greatly increased our reach outside of Mount Vernon into Knox County. As many grandparents bring non-local children to SPI, we estimate that half of the family visits from outside Knox County actually contain some local visitors as well.

Although we serve all of Knox County, we looked more closely at our visitors from Mount Vernon to see their geographic distribution using school assignments as a proxy for location. This year we have improved our representation across the Mount Vernon City Schools to include more families from Twin Oak and Pleasant Street attendance areas; however, like last year we still have an over representation from Wiggin St and East School.

**Families visiting SPI Spot**



**Mount Vernon Assigned Schools (SPI Spot and Parks) (by family)**



Our presence in the parks program improves our reach to children assigned to Dan Emmet and Pleasant Street Schools, though we still have lower representation from Columbia School and Dan Emmet than the actual populations enrolled in those schools.

*\*Note we do not have a complete data set for assigned schools for visitors, but we believe these data are an accurate picture of family visits to our Discovery Space. Data from the parks program are more complete. As data was taken about assigned schools rather than schools children were actually attending, and many children are not school age yet, we cannot make any statements about the percentage of home schooled children we serve.*

## Operations

SPI joined the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) this year. Yearly members now receive free general admission to other ASTC museums that are more than 90 miles from our location, and half price general admission to The Works in Newark and COSI in Columbus.

Our Discovery Space is now open over 200 days per year and at least 39 hours a week. Each month we offer a free day or time to visit. In the summer the free open house is during the First Friday celebration, and in the winter, admission on Second Saturdays is free. We have also begun some programming on these Second Saturdays with Pi day in March and the Science of Color with Gund Gallery in April. We hope to offer more collaborative programming on these free winter open house days.

SPI Spot is busiest on Saturdays and Thursdays during the school year, but in the summer visitors appear to favor weekdays- Fridays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, more adults are more likely to present around the weekend days (Fri., Sat., Mon.) in the summer. Larger family groups favor Saturday hours and summertime visits. The number of people visiting SPI on a particular day when there are no special events outside varies widely and ranges from none to as high as 40 (16 adults and 24 children). The average is 14 visitors per day that includes eight children and six adults. Class field trips usually host 15-25 children at a time. For larger groups with older children, we set up the Discovery Lab with additional exhibits and split the groups in half. For multiple classes, we rotate





groups through other downtown places of interest including Paragraphs Books next door. This arrangement has made it possible for more children to visit SPI Spot on a given field trip day without overcrowding. On First Fridays, SPI Spot typically hosts at least 150 visitors that include a slight majority of children. These events tend to be very crowded, and we have been very happy to expand into the street with water play and Imagination Playground.

### Looking into the next fiscal year

In July we finished summer camps with two STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Math) focused camps. The Science Olympic Challenge camp was offered by the Girl Scouts of Ohio Heartland in our Discovery Lab. The Junk Box Challenge camp where middle schoolers constructed the strongest chain, the best catapult, and the coolest roller coaster ramps was presented by Janelle Harbough, an MVMS Science Teacher.

Summer activities at the parks program and Music in the Garden continue into August. Additionally SPI will be made an appearance at the Farmers Market Family Day and the Ohiolina music festival in August.



Planning has begun to bring STEMfest to Mount Vernon in February 2015 in conjunction with The Works, COTC, Kenyon, MVNU and other collaborators. STEMfest is an annual competition for middle school and high school students to demonstrate and practice STEM skills, and it is an industry showcase to let everyone know the importance of STEM skills.

Our programming theme for the upcoming year will be water. We will explore its fabulous properties and use water as a context to investigate other phenomena. Programming for preschool and school age children will begin in September.

## Treasurer's Report

This fiscal year, SPI Spot continued to receive the majority of its support from donations, fundraising and grants. Donations and fundraising provided 45% of operating income and grants provided 35% of operating income. Grants were received from Ariel Foundation, NASA, The Energy Cooperative Round-up Foundation and The Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County's Youth Philanthropy Initiative.

SPI Spot experienced a significant increase in payroll expense over the prior fiscal year.

This is due to an increase in the hours that the science discovery space is open for visitors and additional programming efforts for outreach programs in the community. SPI Spot plans to continue and expand these efforts in the coming fiscal year.

For a second consecutive year, SPI Spot served as fiduciary partner for the Summer Music Garden Concert Series. SPI Spot also joined the The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). The ASTC is a nonprofit organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering public engagement with science.

## SPI Spot

### Statement of Operations

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

	Total
<b>Revenue &amp; Support</b>	
Attendance income	5,907
Camp revenue	3,065
Donations & Fundraising	26,207
Grants	20,315
Outreach programs & birthday parties	2,838
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>58,332</b>

**Expenses**

<b>Accounting &amp; Payroll software</b>	869
<b>Advertising</b>	388
<b>Bank Charges</b>	20
<b>Camp expenses - 2013</b>	1,181
<b>Commissions &amp; fees - Ohio annual report fee</b>	100
<b>Dues &amp; Subscriptions</b>	884
<b>Grant-related expenses</b>	<b>2,898</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	389
<b>Legal &amp; Professional Fees</b>	950
<b>Meals and Entertainment</b>	165
<b>Office Expenses</b>	119
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	42
<b>Taxes</b>	1,999
<b>Wages</b>	26,132
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>28,172</b>
<b>Promotional</b>	596
<b>Rent or Lease</b>	11,750
<b>Repair &amp; Maintenance</b>	441
<b>Shipping and postage expense</b>	123
<b>Stationery &amp; Printing</b>	810
<b>Subcontractors</b>	50
<b>Supplies</b>	767
<b>Supplies &amp; Materials</b>	4,177
<b>Utilities</b>	4,689
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>59,538</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(1,206)</b>
<b>Other Income</b>	
<b>Interest Earned</b>	15
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>	
<b>Depreciation</b>	274
<b>Penalties &amp; Settlements</b>	75
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>(334)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(1,540)</b>

## Supporters in 2013-2014 Fiscal Year

### **MICROBIOLOGIST \$1-\$99**

Anonymous  
Sam and Paula Barone  
Community Foundation match  
Ted and Diane Dinger  
John and Gwen Hollback  
Kroger Community Rewards  
Linda and John Legros  
Marthalee Schaub  
Ric and Ellen Sheffield  
Andrea and Mark Stewart  
Jana Stewart  
Martha Stuller  
Laurie Thompson  
Paula Turner  
Nancy and Lawrence Vail  
Jeffrey Williams

### **GEOLOGIST**

#### **Donors and Yearly Members \$100-\$249**

Anonymous  
Brian and Nikki Artus  
Dr. Robert and Kathy Atwell  
Duane Barber  
Carolyn Batt  
Connie Barton  
Eric Beach and Dr. Amanda Graff  
Karen Bagely and Chris Bickford  
Keith and Kate Burley  
Patty Burns and Wade Powell  
Linda and Corydon Byard  
Janet Chandler  
Andrew and Colleen Clarkson  
Exchange Club  
Sonia and Jay Corrigan  
Anastasia Congdon and Jim Dennen  
Eric and Kami Diehl  
John Dumbaugh  
Doug and Susan Givens  
Lei Gu  
Dr. Geoff Gregg and Debbie Shepherd-Gregg  
Rachel and Charles Gregg  
John and Kristin Hofferberth  
Jim and Mary Lou Imel  
Jennie Jacobson and Jim Huang  
Sarah Kahrl  
Christopher Kuchers and Amy Murnen  
Sheila Lambert

Jennifer Lebold  
Ben and Kay Locke  
Steve and Jeanne Mullendore  
Dennis McWilliams  
Elizabeth Morehead  
Sally and Joe Nelson  
Susan K. Pastor  
Dr. David and Marci Pressler  
Drs. Ramanadharao and Meerabai Pamulapati  
Mollie Ring and Ryan Phillips  
Dr. Robert and Patricia Ronk  
Kerry Rouhier  
Jack and Ashley Scott  
Greg and Susan Spaid  
Paul and Linda Spurgeon  
Heidi Smith  
Ian and Charlotte Watson  
Rachel and Zachary Weyant  
Andrea White and Hewlet McFarlane  
Susan and Gordon White  
Libby and Alex Wright

### **PHYSICIST \$250-500**

Dr. Lori and Tom Beach  
James and Maureen Buchwald  
John and Jane DeCosky  
Dr. Terrence and Valerie Klopacic  
Robert and Elisabeth Meier  
Larry and Sarah Reed  
Rolls Royce Employee Charity & Civic Fund  
Jan Schild

### **CHEMIST \$500-\$1000**

Ann Laudeman  
Frederick and Deborah Reeder  
Ken and Jan Reynolds  
Kurt and Sandy Schisler  
Ted and Ann Schnormeier

### **ASTRONOMER \$1000+**

Kathryn Louise Edwards, PhD.  
Elizabeth Ring and William Gwin Mather Fund  
The Peters Creek Fund  
Mark and Denise Ramser  
Karen Buchwald Wright