The Sciencenter

Looking to the future

By Dean Briere

As I draw near the anniversary of my first year as Executive Director of the Sciencenter, I can't help but reflect on 2017 while anticipating a new year of exciting changes and more opportunities to engage with our incredible community.

Not surprisingly, 2017 was a year of changes—big, small, and everything in between. Most significantly, it brought the completion of a $4.1M campaign to revitalize our exhibits and programs; our longtime Executive Director and my good friend, Charlie Traumann, retired after 25 years at the helm; and I began as Executive Director.

2017 was also a year of remarkable growth. To date, it is the largest attendance year in Sciencenter history—since January 1, 2017, nearly 110,000 guests have walked through our doors to explore science. On October 29th, we saw our largest attendance day in Sciencenter history with 1,570 guests joining us for Spooky Science. And on August 21st, nearly 900 people attended our solar eclipse party. We saw summer camps, families with children, and adults without children brought together by the power and wonder of science. It was especially nice to see people sharing at that event—sharing eclipse glasses, homemade pinhole cameras and viewers, and simply sharing their knowledge of science and the eclipse.

This past year, we also experienced significant growth in our outreach programs. We expanded our partnership with Head Start, which brings science education to underserved youth and their families. Through this partnership...

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With an eye to the future, we are also embarking on a revitalization of our already strong strategic plan, putting into words a description of our ultimate goal: to remain an innovative organization that delivers programs and services in remarkable and integrated ways for the benefit of our community, for decades to come. We will begin this journey by trying to better understand the question, “How can the Sciencenter continue to ensure our relevance in the modern era?”

There is no shortage of research indicating the benefits of museum visits: They provide memorable, immersive learning experiences; they introduce visitors to unknown worlds and subject matter; they offer unique environments for quality time with family. Yet the question remains, “What does the future hold?” How can we provide better services, be more inclusive, and be a better partner to our community?

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