Passing the Torch
by Charlie Trautmann, Executive Director

Our community has shown an extraordinary level of support in helping the Sciencenter re-imagine itself — and for that we are most grateful. Four years ago, following several years of community listening, three retreats, and much discussion, the Sciencenter embarked on an ambitious $3.8-million campaign, Curious. Confident. Inspired., to renovate, replace, or augment most of our exhibits, facilities, and programs, and grow our endowment. I’m pleased to report that, as of this writing, we have raised over $4.1 million and are under way with exciting changes to the Sciencenter.

As many of you know, this is my last director’s column. Later this month, I’ll be retiring after 26 years of service as your executive director. Looking back, these years represent an amazing journey for all of us, made possible not only by the generosity of our donors, but also by so many individuals who have contributed their time and talent. The Sciencenter we all enjoy today was built in large part by 4,000 volunteers, 26 of whom gave 1,000 hours or more to build it, operate it, and advance its vision of “a world in which every young person is inspired to use science in shaping a better future.” We’re celebrating these remarkable volunteers with a new plaque, located at the entrance to the Saltonstall Animal Room. Largely as a result of their efforts, our story has often been described by world-renowned science writer and producer Ann Druyan as “The Little Sciencenter That Could.”

I’m incredibly pleased that the Sciencenter has been able to recruit one of the most capable individuals I know, Dean Briere, as our next executive director. I pass the torch with gratitude and confidence, knowing that the Sciencenter is in excellent hands, and I look forward to joining you in supporting the Sciencenter’s vision as it embarks on its exciting next chapter.

Welcome, Dean Briere

We are pleased to welcome Dean Briere as the Sciencenter’s new executive director. Dean joins us from the Arizona Science Center in Phoenix, Arizona where he served as Chief Finance and Administration Officer. Dean brings with him over 25 years of executive planning, administration, education, guest service, and exhibit development in the museum sector. Prior to the Arizona Science Center, Dean served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Discovery Place in Charlotte, North Carolina and as Vice President of Education, Programs, and Guest Services for the North Carolina Museum of Life Science.

“Under the leadership of Charlie Trautmann, the Sciencenter has become a pillar of the Ithaca community as well as a nationally recognized organization,” says Briere. “Building upon this momentum, the Sciencenter is positioned to continue to be a place to foster innovation, collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking – necessary skills to understand the world around us and proactively shape a better future. This is our goal not only in Ithaca but in science centers around the world.”
Expanding Programs. Expanding Impact.

You may have noticed a number of changes at the Sciencenter recently! As a result of our successful Capital Campaign: Curious. Confident. Inspired., we have added a number of exciting new exhibits and programs to every area of the Sciencenter.

For our Early Explorers (children 0–5), this past year, 1,187 adults and 1,245 children took part in our weekly Science Together programs to explore flubber, make predictions with baking soda and vinegar, and investigate worms while developing valuable science process skills.

Through one of our newest partnerships with Head Start, the national program that promotes school readiness, the Sciencenter hosted 18 Head Start Teacher Professional Development Workshops and 20 Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Workshops where 629 parents and 852 children joined us after-hours for special hands-on activities.

In the Curiosity Corner, our early childhood space, we’ve added a new Family Learning Area. This space is used for early childhood programming and for teaming up with researchers from Cornell University to investigate how children learn.

For our Young Scientists (children 5–11), we’ve added many new exhibits on sound and engineering. We’ve added new species to the Saltonstall Animal Room, including the New York Natives space, which highlights animals from the Finger Lakes region. And we’ve updated our Brooks Family Foundation Ocean Education Gallery, which now features an interactive Tidepool Touch Tank, a yellow submarine featuring underwater footage of our local watershed, and a mural of the Maine Coast. Over the next couple of years, you’ll see even more new additions as we replace and renovate nearly all the exhibits here at the Sciencenter.

For our Future Science Leaders (children 11–14), we recently finished construction of the Kristen Galvin Teen STEM Lab. Our Future Science Leaders now have their own video production room, large activity development stations, and designated space to build exhibit prototypes. Last year, 45 teens took part in this program. They created stop-motion animation videos, designed and prototyped museum exhibits, learned and used coding to answer scientific questions that cannot be tested in the real world, developed and led hands-on activities with our guests, and collected data on the neighboring stream to analyze and share with museum guests.

To see what our Future Science Leaders have been up to lately and to learn more about the Future Science Leaders program, visit www.sciencenter.org/programs.

With so much happening at the Sciencenter, and still much more to come, you won’t want to miss a thing. Visit us often to see the changes and participate in all of the exciting hands-on science we have to offer.

For more information, please contact Michelle Kortenaar, Director of Program at 607.272.0600 X 124.
Thank You, Sciencenter Donors!

Simply put, we couldn’t do it without you. Thanks to your generosity, every child in our region has the opportunity to connect with science through those amazing moments of discovery that spark their curiosity to understand how the world works and get them hooked on the excitement of discovery and learning.

Your gifts to the Annual Fund help us reach all the children in our region through programs like Museums for All, where admission is $1 for EBT cardholders and our Membership Access Program (MAP), where families who qualify for free or reduced lunch receive a free Sciencenter membership.

Donations to our Capital Campaign, Curious. Confident. Inspired. are helping us bring about a fresh look to the Sciencenter, through new hands-on exhibits and educational programming on sustainability, climate change, early childhood education, health and wellness, ocean science, and more.

Together we are engaging generations of young minds through science, learning, and discovery so that they may be empowered to use that knowledge in shaping a better future.

To make a gift to the Sciencenter, please contact Christine Bissen, Director of Advancement, at 607.272.0600 x 119.

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Corporate Membership directly supports exhibits and educational programming at the Sciencenter, while providing benefits to company employees. For more information, please call Christine Bissen at 607.272.0600 x 119, or visit www.sciencenter.org.
**Spring Hours**

Tuesday – Saturday: 10 am – 5 pm  
Sunday: Noon – 5 pm  
Outdoor Exhibits open April 1 weather permitting.

Open Memorial Day, Monday, May 29

**Admission**

Members: Free  
Kids under 2: Free  
General (2 – 64): $8  
Seniors (65+): $7  
EBT Cardholders: $1

**What’s Happening this Spring**

**Register for Summer Camp**
Experience a fun and hands-on science-filled summer at Sciencenter Summer Camp. Learn more or register today at www.sciencenter.org!

**Sensory Hours: April 30**
Families and children with sensory integration challenges, join us for Sensory Hours. Make connections with other families while having fun and enjoying interactive learning in an inviting and accepting environment.

Visit www.sciencenter.org for a complete listing of upcoming programs and events.

**NEW Featured Exhibition: Opens May 13**


**In Memoriam**

Amy Suzanne “Suzie” Soyring

In late December, the Sciencenter lost a longtime friend and dedicated supporter, Amy Suzanne “Suzie” Soyring. Suzie was not only one of the Sciencenter’s original board members, but it was also she who suggested the current location of the Sciencenter as a possible site, as Suzie and her dog would frequently take walks nearby. Suzie was always active throughout the Ithaca community and was instrumental in allowing the Sciencenter to become what it is today.

Thank you, Suzie, for your hard work and dedication; you will truly be missed.