

Development, Membership & Marketing

2024-25 Development, Membership & Marketing Plan Report

The Development Membership and Marketing team's 2024 overall goal was to "sustain a thriving Wild Center by growing awareness of our work, driving visitation, and generating earned and unearned income through strategic targeted development, membership and marketing."

By focusing on strategic communication, audience engagement, financial stewardship, and community partnerships, the Development, Membership and Marketing team met many of our 2024 goals to ensure a sustainable Wild Center.

This plan heavily relies on targeted marketing and communication strategies to both drive visitation and reach different audiences.

- **Attendance and Revenue:**
 - The Wild Center welcomed **108,711 visitors**—an 11% increase year-over-year
 - Admission revenue equaled \$1,208,906—a 3% increase year-over-year
 - Group travel revenue up 35% year-over-year
- **Digital Stats**
 - 1.2 mil webpage views—a 7.8% increase year-over-year
 - Facebook reach equaled 3.2 mil users—an 18% increase
 - Total Digital Advertising: 13.2 million impressions and 228,650 link clicks
- **Public Relations & Strategic Communications**
 - 185 published articles resulting in 476.36 mil impressions.
 - Hosted 10 press trips resulting in over 4 mil video views
- **Miscellaneous Marketing, Branding and Communications**
 - Successfully executed a campaign to name The Wild Center number one science museum in the country in USA Today's 10Best contest
 - Named, branded and promoted Raquette River Roll

By identifying, cultivating, soliciting and stewarding a broad base of supporters, we met two of our major fundraising goals - Membership and Annual Fund.

- **Membership:**
 - The membership goal of \$325,000 was met and exceeded for a total of \$350,810, a 14% Increase over 2023. We also increased our number of membership households by 243 members.

- **Annual Fund:**
 - The 2024 Annual Fund goal of \$2,005,300 was also met and exceeded, **totaling \$2,013,060.**

In 2024, grants were submitted to government entities, foundations and individuals.

- 41 grant applications were submitted totaling \$11,131,311
- 24 applications were awarded totaling \$3,797,684
- Award decisions are pending for
 - A \$1,000,000 capital funding request for the Net-Zero Convening Center, submitted to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand as part of FY2025 Congressionally Directed Spending
 - A \$250,000 request to AmeriCorps for the living allowance for 10 Members in 2025-2026
- 7 grants totaling \$107,987 were awarded through partnerships with Phipps Conservancy, Paul Smith's, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network (ACORN), the University of Utah and the High Desert Museum.

The Development and Membership team planned and executed five stewardship and cultivation events throughout the summer and participated in the NYC Climate Week event. Through these events, our team continued building and stewarding new and existing relationships with individuals invested in The Wild Center's mission and work. Staff continued to steward Linda Vaughan Society members and our Patron Circle donors to continue building on our planned giving initiatives.

Work with board committees, such as the Committee on Trustees, the DEAI Sub Committee and the Development Committee, helped our work to steward donors and potential new Advisory Board and Trustees. Our Board's work with the Take 5 program helped to reach 97 people and raised \$143,459.

In 2024, our community partnerships were fortified through different initiatives, such as the Total Solar Eclipse Kick-off event and auction, in which we partnered with seven local organizations to celebrate the once-in-a-lifetime event and the Tupper Lake community. We've continued those efforts of community outreach and building through our Business Partnership Program, where we renewed nine partners, with one of those partners upgrading a level and welcoming nine new partners.

Our work also involved engaging existing and new volunteers. Throughout the year, we had 123 volunteers working in various capacities across our campus, for a total of

3,740.50 volunteer hours, with a wage value of \$125,269. We also partnered with University of Rochester students who helped develop and enhance our volunteer webpage, which has brought in 111 new applications, and of these, 96 actively volunteered.

In addition, our team worked extensively with the Board of Trustees and Advisory Board to gain approval for a comprehensive campaign and officially kicked off the quiet phase. A campaign cabinet was assembled and priority projects have been determined to move forward with.

Overall, many of the Development, Membership and Marketing teams goals were met to further support our overall goal to sustain The Wild Center through growing awareness of our work, driving visitation, and generating earned and unearned income through strategic targeted development, membership and marketing.