



DODGE

NATURE CENTER

THOMAS IRVINE DODGE NATURE CENTER
Annual Report | Fiscal Year 2019





MISSION

Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.



VISION

Inspiring commitment to the thoughtful care of the environment.



VALUES

Environmental Stewardship
Experiential Education
Teacher Education
Community Inclusiveness
Collaboration

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Olivia I. Dodge, 1918–2009

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**Dodge Nature Center meets all the
accountability standards of the Charities
Review Council of Minnesota.**



Dear Friends,

Every day, Dodge Nature Center and Preschool create immersive, hands-on learning environments that inspire children and adults. Every time a naturalist leads a group on a hike through the prairie, or a preschool teacher kneels down to investigate an animal track, our relationships with students and surroundings grow. Every field trip brings looks of amazement to the faces of schoolchildren tasting maple syrup or holding a chicken for the first time. Every outdoor class or camp moves young people to take notice and explore the world around them.

Nature learning at Dodge leaves an impression. We know that from heartfelt stories, like the ones shared in the pages of this report:

- Dodge can kickoff educational journeys like that of Carolyn Brose, whose curiosity about the natural world was sparked as a 5-year-old in Dodge's Woolly Bears program. That curiosity carried her to college and the Alaskan Arctic, where she researches invasive species and climate change.
- It can jumpstart career paths like Kayla Damiano's, who brought what she learned as a Naturalist Fellow at Dodge to her work in natural resources for the Forest County Potawatomi Community in Wisconsin.
- And Dodge impacts not just individuals, but whole families and multiple generations, as you'll learn from the Garcia family of West St. Paul.

Your support of Dodge Nature Center and Preschool supports those connections, inspirations, and opportunities to dig in and learn. Close by or far beyond our borders, Dodge environmental education makes a difference.



As we publish this report, the global pandemic has disrupted all of our lives. Because of your support, Dodge is fortunate to have finished the last fiscal year on strong footing. Our naturalists and teachers are innovative, creative people; they demonstrate that the outdoor classroom can move indoors when needed. Together, we can weather these stressful times.

We hope you can find peace and comfort outdoors, in your neighborhood and at Dodge. Our trails are ready for you to re-engage with nature, listen to wind blow through the leaves, and hear the rooster crow on the farm.

Thank you for your strong support of Dodge Nature Center and Preschool—past, present and into the future.

Because of you, every year, tens of thousands of people learn about nature and are inspired to care for our shared environment. We are resilient and ready for our future.

With gratitude,

Jason Sanders
Jason Sanders
Executive Director

Allan Klein

Allan Klein
President, Board of Directors

Environmental Education

September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019

Classes	
Field Trips and Afterschool Programs	24,395 students 25,556 contact hours
Outreach Programs	4,408 participants 116 events 4,408 contact hours
Naturalists at Heritage E-Stem Magnet School and Garlough Environmental Magnet School	824 students 20,373 contact hours 29,627 students gained
TOTAL	50,337 hours of nature learning

Dodge Nature Center has developed an expansive curriculum tailored to the seasons and aligned to **Minnesota's K-12 academic standards** in science and social studies. Both during and outside of school hours, **naturalists teach more than 40 subjects** from animal tracking to wind power. Dodge offers outdoor, experiential learning that enhances what children study in the traditional classroom.

Dodge Nature Preschool	
School Year Enrollment	194 students 51,518 contact hours
Summer Camp	170 campers 7,208 contact hours
TOTAL	364 preschool students benefited from 58,726 hours of early childhood environmental education
Preschool Educators Learning Conference April 25, 2019	50 participants 300 professional development hours awarded

Dodge Nature Preschool is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and certified as a Nature Explore Classroom. It has received the highest possible rating of 4 stars from Parent Aware, Minnesota's quality rating system.

Camps



TOTAL CAMPERS
575

Environmental Education

September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019

Public Programs	
O.W.L.S. OUTWARDLY, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS	368
WOMEN IN THE WOODS	316
OTHER ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMS	777
TOTAL	1,461

Community Events	
FROSTY FUN FESTIVAL	400
PANCAKE BREAKFAST	315
ROCK THE BARN	625
TOTAL	1,340

Volunteers

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers! They are indispensable in restoring habitat, caring for animals, providing environmental education, and supporting community events.



SOCIAL RETURN
\$214,643.75

Estimated Minnesota value of each volunteer hour: \$28.15 per hour
 Source: Independent Sector, 2018

Steve Kline, 2019 Volunteer of the Year, with Shakespeare the Barred Owl

Dodge makes a difference



*Kayla with painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) at Dodge Nature Center.*

Kayla Damiano

Senior Natural Resources Technician, Forest County Potawatomi Community

When Kayla Damiano began her Naturalist Fellowship at Dodge, she had a college degree in biology, but not much teaching experience. She credits her Dodge mentors for helping her grow as an environmental educator.

“I learned to let kids’ imaginations and explanations lead,” she says. “Let them tell me what they see before I say anything.”

Teaching classes daily at Dodge, covering any of 40 nature subjects, prepared her well for the next step in her career.

In her work for the Forest County Potawatomi Community in Wisconsin, Kayla wears many hats—and often waders. She supports both biologists in the field and the environmental education team. On a given day, she may be radio collaring black bears or tagging monarch butterflies. The next day, she’ll be helping kids dip nets into a pond to sample aquatic wildlife.

On behalf of current and future Tribe members, she aims to improve air and water quality, conserve wildlife and habitat, and reduce invasive species. **“Without Dodge, this would not have been possible for me,”** Kayla says. “It was the variety of experience gained here. It was the attitude of ‘do your best’ and a drive to learn everything you can.”



On a stream in Forest County Potawatomi tribal lands, Kayla assesses the fish population using a scientific survey method called electrofishing.

Caroline Brose

Organismal Biology and Ecology
major, Colorado College

As she conducted fieldwork in the Alaskan Arctic in summer 2019, undergraduate researcher Caroline Brose found time for self-reflection under the midnight sun. She was there to collect samples of bird vetch, a beautiful purple flowering vine that is also a noxious weed threatening native plant species. Caroline had known for years that she wanted to be an ecologist, working outdoors, in the field. But where could she trace her curiosity about the natural world?

When Caroline was a young girl, her family lived in the Twin Cities and she recalled coming to Dodge Nature Center with her mom and brothers for Woolly Bears, an early childhood nature program (now called Nature Playdate).

From exploring Dodge's forests to conducting fieldwork in Alaska—it felt like a through line in her life. She remembered Pam Welisevich, the naturalist who taught those classes, and was inspired to write to her:

“Because of you, I have known for my entire life how to identify a woolly bear [the caterpillar of the Isabella tiger moth] when I see one... I don't know how often you hear from your old kids, but **I just wanted you to know the impact you've made on my life and career choice.**”

At the Alaska Invasive Species Workshop in October 2019, Caroline was invited to present her research, *Decrease in Soil Moisture Positively Influences Bird Vetch (Vicia cracca) Growth and Nodulation in a Boreal Forest*. She plans to pursue a PhD and research how climate change affects plant species and ecosystems.

“I've never forgotten Woolly Bears,” Caroline says. “Looking for animal tracks in the snow, tagging along behind the naturalist. **Dodge is where I learned that everything is connected in nature.**”



Caroline in a field of bird vetch (*Vicia cracca*), a noxious weed and invasive species in Alaska.



Caroline at a Woolly Bears program with Dodge naturalist Pam Welisevich, circa 2005.

Ellie, Caleb and Penelope Garcia

When her son Caleb was ready for kindergarten, Ellie Garcia never doubted where she would send him for elementary school: Garlough Environmental Magnet School in West St. Paul. It's the same school she and her siblings attended, and it's the school that could give Caleb a deep relationship with Dodge Nature Center, located just across Charlton Street. At Garlough, he would learn from a Dodge naturalist every week, from kindergarten through 4th grade.

“He is an outdoor kid,” Ellie says of her son. **“Dodge is the perfect place for him.”** She sends Caleb to Dodge camps to fill his vacation days with farm animals, scavenger hunts, s'mores, hiking and honeybees.

Hiking together on the Main Property, the Garcias know every turn of the trail. Caleb seeks out the willow that overhangs the Farm Pond; it's a perfect climbing tree. He identifies chickadees and woodpeckers by sound (“Teacher says to listen for the peck, peck, peck!”). His two-year-old sister Penelope points out a pair of Canada geese waddling across the ice. She counts them: “One, two!”

Ellie remembers that when she was Caleb's age, Dodge had more fields and fewer trails. She and her classmates would cut through the woods following deer tracks, as enthralled by the wide and wild spaces as her children are today.

Past, present and future, Dodge is a place for the Garcias—and every family—to explore all that nature has to teach.



Ellie, Caleb and Penelope Garcia on a winter's hike on the Main Property.

Financials

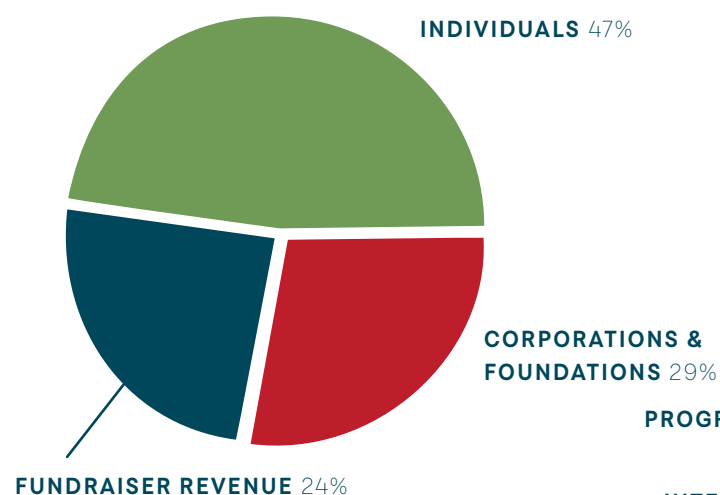
September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Public Support			
Contributions	560,685	632,830	1,193,515
Fundraiser Revenue (Net)	177,637	-	177,637
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT	738,322	632,830	1,371,152
Revenue			
Visitor Fees and Tuition	446,237		446,237
Preschool Tuition	816,523		816,523
Rental Revenue	75,374		75,374
Interest and Dividends Income	43,875	283,425	327,300
Miscellaneous	103,773		103,773
TOTAL REVENUE	1,485,782	283,425	1,769,207
Net Assets Released from Restrictions			
Endowment Released from Restrictions	277,980	(277,980)	
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	600,539	(600,539)	
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	3,102,623	37,736	3,140,359

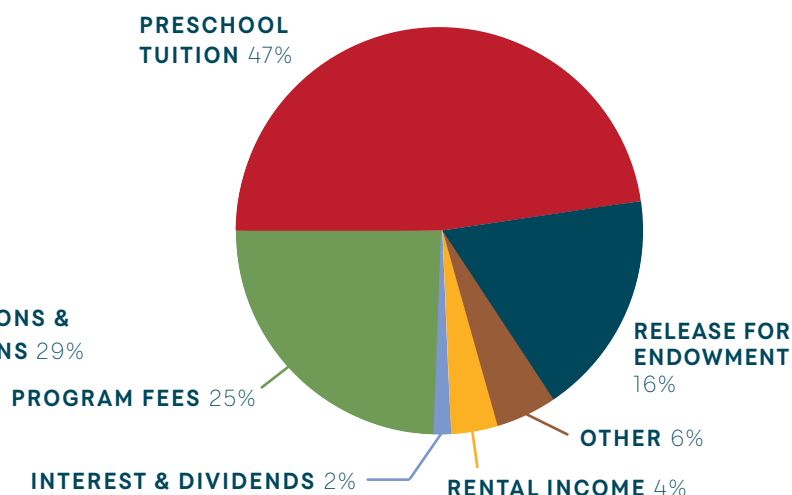
Statement of Financial Position

August 31, 2019

PUBLIC SUPPORT BY SOURCE



EARNED REVENUE BY SOURCE



EXPENSES			
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Program Services			
Nature & Environmental Education	2,076,194		2,076,194
Total	2,076,194		2,076,194
SUPPORTING SERVICE			
Management & General	327,923		327,923
Fundraising	316,869		316,869
Total Supporting Service	644,792		644,792
Total Expense	2,720,986		2,720,986
Increase in Net Assets	381,637	37,736	419,373
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS			
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	8,379,282	12,593,485	20,972,767
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	381,637	37,736	
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	8,760,919	12,631,221	21,392,140

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DODGE
NATURE CENTER

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DodgeNatureCenter.org

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