

# CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

of NEW HAMPSHIRE

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2026-2028



A hand is shown touching a red, textured fabric, possibly a shoe or bag, against a green background. The background features black outlines of several shoes, suggesting a retail or design environment.

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## AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITIES

At the heart of the Children’s Museum of New Hampshire is a simple, powerful belief: that play is essential to learning, and that every child deserves a place to imagine, explore, and grow.

As we look to the future, we are proud to present this strategic plan—a roadmap that reflects our commitment to creating joyful, engaging experiences for all children and families in our community. This plan is the result of deep listening, thoughtful collaboration, and a shared vision of what’s possible when curiosity leads the way.

Our world is changing rapidly, and so are the needs of the families we serve. Now more than ever, CMNH must be responsive, inclusive, innovative, and sustainable. This strategic plan outlines how we will rise to meet that challenge—by strengthening our programs, expanding access, deepening community partnerships, and ensuring our long-term environmental and financial health.

Each goal within this plan is rooted in our commitment to anticipate change, embrace innovation, and build programs that reflect the dynamic communities around us. Through this work, we reaffirm our role not just as a children’s museum, but as a trusted resource, a community hub, and a beacon of opportunity for generations to come.

We are excited to move forward together—with our visitors, partners, supporters, and team members—as we bring this vision to life. Thank you for being part of the journey.

Jane Bard, *President*

Derek Romano, *Board Chair*



# OUR COLLABORATORS

**Thank you** to the many people who committed their talent, time, and insights to developing the Children's Museum of New Hampshire's Strategic Plan: our Board of Directors, CMNH staff team, area educators, civic leaders, and sustaining donors throughout the region. We especially appreciate the thoughtful input of many Museum members, caregivers, and educators who participated in conversations, surveys, and feedback mechanisms.

## CMNH Staff Team

Jane Bard, *President*  
Megan Beach,  
*Museum Experience Manager*  
Meredith Brustlin,  
*Content Specialist*  
Alyssa Cluley, *Experience Guide*  
Neva Cole,  
*Communications Director*  
Monique Deforge, *Director of  
Development and Community  
Engagement*  
Emily deJong,  
*Front Desk Manager &  
Communications Assistant*  
Noelle Duffy,  
*Senior Experience Guide*  
Hannah Durakovic,  
*Experience Guide*  
Eric Erwin, *Director of Exhibits  
and Facilities*  
Eryn Frost,  
*Senior Experience Guide*  
Xanthi Gray,  
*Education Director*

Liliana Mangan,  
*Experience Guide*  
Colie McClain,  
*STEAM & School-Aged  
Programs Coordinator*  
Leila McRae,  
*Membership Manager*  
Bill Oparowski,  
*Maintenance*  
Leah Pereira,  
*Experience Guide*  
Julia Purvis,  
*Experience Guide*  
Julia Rozzi,  
*Experience Guide*  
Sarah Strangas,  
*Director of Finance and  
Human Resources*  
Lauren Trainor,  
*Experience Guide*  
Emily Zaleski,  
*Lead Educator*

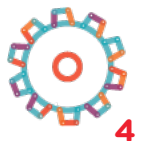


## Community Stakeholders & Partners

Donors  
CMNH Members  
Annual Visitors  
Business Partners & Supporters  
Early Childcare Providers  
Grant Funders  
Public Libraries  
Social Service Agencies  
Educators & Schools  
Social Media Followers  
Universities  
Virtual Educational Content Viewers

## CMNH Long Range Planning Committee

Stacey Hunter,  
*Committee Chair*  
Jane Bard, *President*  
Meredith Brustlin,  
*Content Specialist*  
Brian Garrett,  
*Board Member*  
Xanthi Gray, *Director  
of Education*  
Kelly Mangum,  
*Board Member*  
Derek Romano,  
*Board Chair*



# MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

## VISION

To inspire all to become the next generation of innovators and creative thinkers

## MISSION

Actively engage families in hands-on discovery

## CORE VALUES

**Always Learning** – We value lifelong learning as an organization, as professionals, and for the communities we serve.

**Collaborative and Connected** – We value partnership relationships that strengthen our practice, leverage our collective power, and advance our mission.

**Inclusive** – We celebrate diversity and strive to be relevant and accessible to all who can benefit from our services.

**Joyful** – We value playfulness, creativity, innovation, risk taking, courage, and entrepreneurship and promote the value of joyful learning as a key component of our work.

**Eco-conscious** – We strive to use products, services, and business practices that have the least impact on the Earth and environment.



## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION WHEN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

### FINANCES:

Is our business model working? Do we need to modify our business plan in the next three years, and if so, how and what do we hope to achieve?

How do we ensure future financial stability?

### INTERNAL:

What investments do we need to make in the facility to keep it functioning, efficient, and designed for future challenges?

What matters to our employees? How do we recruit and retain a qualified and forward-thinking team that are committed to making us best-in-class?

### EXHIBITS & PROGRAMS:

What exhibit changes will help us meet our audience needs and our play-based learning goals?

Are our programs meeting our audience needs? What are we uniquely positioned to offer that meets these needs?

### AUDIENCE:

Who is our target audience and how will it change, if at all, as a result of this plan?

We are committed to ensuring all children and families can experience the Museum. How do we achieve this and what do we need to consider for the future?

What is our geographic reach and how is that changing? How do we reach audiences in NH who can't reach us?

What does our audience want and need? How is that changing and how are we equipped to meet these needs?

### EXTERNAL:

Are there any changes to the economy, our competitors, or the early childhood landscape that may impact us?

How do we best communicate our story to increase brand awareness, visitors, and funding?

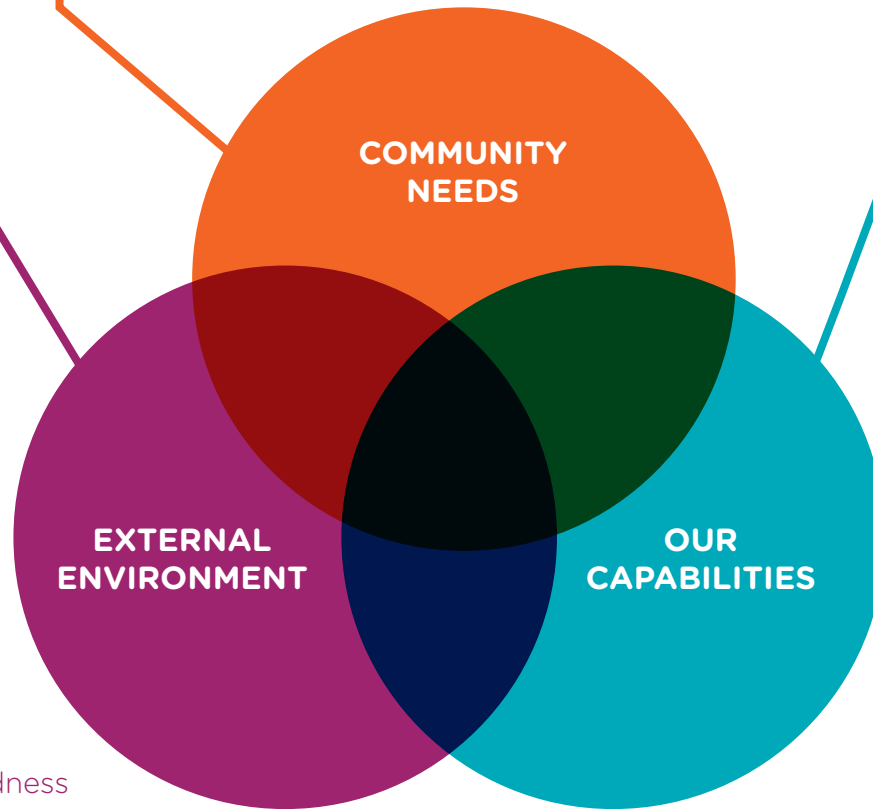


# CMNH STRATEGIC DIRECTION



- ★ Welcoming and safe place for connecting with each other and the community
- ★ Affordable and accessible experiences
- ★ Activities for babies, toddlers, and older children
- ★ Extended hours, enrichment on the weekends for working families
- ★ Support for children's social and emotional growth and family wellness
- ★ Play-based and sensory learning activities that support the many ways children learn
- ★ Support and supplement the role of childcare providers

- ★ Childcare crisis with lack of availability statewide
- ★ Families struggling with mental health
- ★ NH ranks lowest in the country on state funding for education
- ★ Influx of new housing in downtown Dover, including housing for families
- ★ Economic uncertainty for families—lack of affordable housing; high cost of goods and services including groceries, health insurance
- ★ Uncertainty affecting audience discretionary spending
- ★ Ecological/environmental preparedness—climate change and preparing for a future pandemic
- ★ Uncertainty around charitable giving by individuals and businesses
- ★ Uncertainty around federal and state funding for arts organizations
- ★ Low unemployment rate, high rates of job turnover
- ★ 60% of those migrating into NH are adults ages 18-44
- ★ Disruptions in social media



- ★ Agile and responsive to community needs
- ★ Experienced professional staff
- ★ Identified as the state's premier resource for play-based learning
- ★ Creative in-house team to design and build exhibits and experiences
- ★ Creating and distributing high-quality educational content
- ★ Nurturing partnerships that strengthen our impact and meet community needs
- ★ Ability to connect with our audience through a strong database, social media presence, and website
- ★ Being responsible stewards of our finances and investments
- ★ Robust database of audience members, businesses



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The Children's Museum of New Hampshire is the state's premier resource for joyful play-based learning experiences that nurture children's growth and strengthen family connections.

## PILLARS

**DELIVER IMPACTFUL,  
INNOVATIVE, AND  
ENGAGING EXPERIENCES**

**ENHANCE BUSINESS  
PRACTICES THAT  
SUPPORT LONG  
TERM SUCCESS &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY**

**STRENGTHEN  
PRODUCTIVE  
COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS**

## TACTICS

Refresh and renovate exhibits to provide the best possible experience for families

Be NH's trusted resource to support the healthy development and well-being of children and families through play-based learning

Align exhibits and programs with the Museum's mission and vision

Expand our sources of financial support

Build upon systems to ensure the Museum's business continuity

Analyze and optimize marketing efforts and resource allocation

Evaluate relationships with community partners and determine new connections to pursue

Deepen the value we offer our audiences

Ensure that children and families have access to the Museum and its programs and are welcomed, regardless of circumstance or ability to pay



**GOALS**

 New tactic  
 Ongoing

**Deliver Impactful, Innovative, & Engaging Experiences**

*Refresh and renovate exhibits to provide the best possible experience for families*

**2026 2027 2028**

<b>Kids Café, ability to change themes with same infrastructure</b>	2026		
<b>STEAM Lab overhaul</b>	2026		
<b>Technology upgrades to submarine &amp; green screen</b>	2026		
<b>Play Patio investments</b>	2026		
<b>Climber &amp; adjacent Marketplace</b>	2026	2027	
<b>Cochecho Industry refresh</b>		2027	
<b>Coin maze refurbishment</b>		2027	
<b>Cave &amp; Pattern Palace exhibit changes</b>		2027	2028
<b>3D Projection Mapping a “Museum After Dark” experience</b>			
★ Research and price	2026		
★ Design and fund raise		2027	
★ Exhibit and facility construction			2028
<b>Rotate Play Loft activity themes 3x each year</b>	ONGOING		

*Be NH's trusted resource to support the healthy development and wellbeing of children and families through play-based learning (PBL)*

<b>Play-based learning initiatives</b>			
★ Host a PBL playgroup with tips for caregivers	2026		
★ Identify and establish relationships with 3 new PBL partner organizations and sources of funding		2027	
★ Host a childcare teacher PBL appreciation event			2028
<b>Wellness initiatives</b>			
★ Host 4 Wonder & Wellness speaker events for adults; pilot weekend family yoga or movement class; weekly Mindful Moments calming activities with staff	2026		
★ Pilot social playgroup to help families make new friends		2027	
★ Modify strategy for wellness initiatives based on data feedback from previous 2 years			2028



**GOALS CONTINUED**

New tactic  
 Ongoing

**Deliver Impactful, Innovative, & Engaging Experiences**

*Be NH's trusted resource to support the healthy development and wellbeing of children and families through play-based learning (PBL)*

	2026	2027	2028
<b>Sharing resources</b>			
★ Develop and promote menu of PBL program offerings	2026	ONGOING	
★ Present at one conference/workshop in NH annually		2027	ONGOING
★ Craft a PBL social media campaign & searchable database of PBL resources on our website			2028
<i>Align exhibits and programs with the Museum's mission and vision</i>			
<b>Program audit</b>			
★ Conduct impact audit of programs	2026	ONGOING	
★ Distribute program surveys and use results to inform changes		2027	ONGOING
<b>Develop and pilot new programs for target audiences (babies &amp; toddlers, older children, adult/child pairs, working parents, homeschool families)</b>			
★ Pilot two new programs	2026		
★ Evaluate, identify changes, and pilot new programs as needed	ONGOING	2027	ONGOING
★ Continue evaluating and modifying programs		ONGOING	2028
<b>Exhibits audit</b>			
★ Use play-based learning and emotional well-being checklists to audit exhibits and plan new ones	2026		
★ Conduct visitor observations and evaluations of exhibits identified for refreshing during the plan	2026		
★ Implement exhibit changes based on results		2027	2028

## GOALS CONTINUED

### Enhance Business Practices That Support Long Term Success and Environmental Sustainability

■ New tactic  
■ Ongoing

	2026	2027	2028
<i>Expand our sources of financial support</i>			
<b>Long Term Reserves</b>			
★ Identify the designation of funds (endowment, board-designated funds) and establish collateral to promote	2026		
★ Promote and solicit funds		2027	ONGOING
<b>Individual donors</b>			
★ Create solicitation materials for planned giving and ways to donate; strategically utilize in cultivating new gifts among current audiences		2027	ONGOING
★ Cultivate and solicit 50 new donors; promote planned giving on multiple channels			2028
<b>Earned income revenue sources</b>			
★ Monetize PBL resources, including kits of materials; promote	2026	ONGOING	
★ Expand promotion of after-hours rentals, room rentals for other organizations; market new themed after-hours events		2027	ONGOING
★ Establish signature after-hours events using projection mapping technology			2028
<b>Examine development staffing and reallocate as needed to focus on new high-yield funding opportunities</b>			
★ Research funding sectors (corporate sponsorships, regional grants, and others) for growth potential and determine staffing needs	2026	ONGOING	
★ Develop relationships/solicit support from new sector(s)		2027	ONGOING
<i>Build upon systems to ensure the Museum's business continuity</i>			
<b>Advance policies and procedures to reflect best business practice</b>			
★ Conduct insurance analysis, recommend changes to Governance and Finance Committees, reexamine credit card processing fee policies	2026		
★ Conduct employee compensation and benefits analysis, employee retention interviews; implement changes		2027	ONGOING
★ Research alternate practices to streamline front desk operations/visitor check-in			2028



## GOALS CONTINUED

### Enhance Business Practices That Support Long Term Success and Environmental Sustainability

 New tactic  
 Ongoing



#### Build upon systems to ensure the Museum's business continuity

2026 2027 2028

#### Map and organize institutional knowledge, designate and train alternate staff for key functions, staff resource audit

- ★ Designate and train alternate staff for key functions  2026
- ★ Conduct a staff resource audit, redeploy staff  2027
- ★ Map, reorganize, and store institutional knowledge  2028

#### Analyze and invest in facility upgrades needed due to climate change and aging systems

- ★ Refinish wood flooring, reorganize basement storage  2026
- ★ Prepare lower basement for possible flooding  2027
- ★ Energy audit and improvements as warranted  2028

#### Collaborate with city of Dover to address visitor needs and the safety and vitality of Henry Law Park

- ★ Address the safety of walkways in Henry Law Park  2026
- ★ Address parking alternative and way-finding signs  2027  ONGOING

#### Invest in staff resources to support earned revenue streams


- ★ Resource staff audit and implementation  2027  ONGOING

#### Analyze and optimize marketing efforts and resource allocation

#### Identify target geographic regions and audiences for potential growth

- ★ Targeted marketing to reach ten towns  2026  ONGOING
- ★ Targeted marketing to reach three priority audiences  2027  ONGOING
- ★ Targeted marketing to reach ME & MA residents  2028

#### Assess current marketing tools' impact and modify to reach new audiences

- ★ Google Ad Words  2026  ONGOING
- ★ Paid advertising  ONGOING  2027  ONGOING
- ★ Social media channels, website, press releases  ONGOING  2028



## GOALS CONTINUED

 New tactic  
 Ongoing

### Enhance Business Practices That Support Long Term Success and Environmental Sustainability

*Analyze and optimize marketing efforts and resource allocation*

**2026    2027    2028**

#### Invest in new strategic marketing efforts

- ★ Create marketing templates for images/storytelling, banners in sports arenas, tabletops in restaurants
- ★ Co-marketing with other attractions/museums/transportation
- ★ Mobile exposure through business vehicle wraps

2026

ONGOING

2027

ONGOING

2028

#### Use building exterior to garner attention (images of new exhibits, large art installation, surprise lighting)

- ★ Design/install new exterior banners featuring interior photos
- ★ Host one surprise installation outside Museum
- ★ Research/test projection mapping on building exterior

2026

2027

2028

### Strengthen Productive Community Connections

*Evaluate relationships with community partners and determine new connections to pursue*

#### Conduct an impact analysis of current partnerships to determine ones to strengthen and others to cull (programs, volunteers, business, funded admission program, admission pass donations)

- ★ Coordinate inter-department impact evaluation

2026

#### Identify Museum initiatives that could benefit from external partnerships and pursue (programs, marketing, exhibits, business services)

- ★ Establish three new partnerships that advance effort
- ★ Establish three additional partnerships; reassess effectiveness of current partnerships

2027

2027

ONGOING

#### Analyze the benefits of participating in community events and establish guidelines for doing so

- ★ Research community events guidelines of other museums
- ★ Create guidelines and post
- ★ Assess the internal and external impact of participating in community events

2026

2027

2028



## GOALS CONTINUED

### Strengthen Productive Community Connections

New tactic  
 Ongoing

*Deepen the value we offer our audiences*

**2026      2027      2028**

#### Provide regular opportunities for visitor feedback and reflection to stay in tune with their needs and visibly respond to them

- |   |      |         |         |
|---|------|---------|---------|
| ★ Conduct two member and general audience surveys; share updates on our response to audience feedback | 2026 | ONGOING |         |
| ★ Create signs with QR codes for feedback   |      | 2027    | ONGOING |
| ★ Gather feedback to inform next strategic plan   |      |         | 2028    |

#### Create and market an annual schedule of no-cost activities at the Museum/invest in activities that extend our value

- |  |      |      |         |
|--|------|------|---------|
| ★ Design, create marketing plan, and debut annual schedule             | 2026 |      |         |
| ★ Assess effectiveness (increase in attendance/use of access programs) |      | 2027 | ONGOING |

#### Articulate the value we bring to children, families, members, and the community through messaging

- |   |  |         |         |
|---|--|---------|---------|
| ★ Formulate marketing campaign, gather data |  | ONGOING |         |
| ★ Launch marketing campaign                 |  | 2027    | ONGOING |

#### Create and host an annual series of staff trainings to provide visitors with the best experience possible

- |   |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|
| ★ Develop and lead two new customer-focused staff trainings                               | 2026 |      |      |
| ★ Host two staff trainings focused on play-based learning and early childhood development |      | 2027 |      |
| ★ Host quarterly staff trainings  |      |      | 2028 |

*Ensure that children and families have access to the Museum and its programs and are welcomed, regardless of circumstance or ability to pay*

#### Analyze use of all free and discount programs over the past three years and identify those that need bolstering

- |   |      |      |         |
|---|------|------|---------|
| ★ Gather data on the participation numbers for each access program from 23-25, identify ones that are underutilized, create outreach plan to bolster attendance | 2026 |      |         |
| ★ Enact outreach plan   |      | 2027 | ONGOING |
| ★ Track results, modify outreach plan as needed   |      |      | 2028    |



**GOALS CONTINUED**

New tactic  
 Ongoing

**Strengthen Productive Community Connections**

*Ensure that children and families have access to the Museum and its programs and are welcomed, regardless of circumstance or ability to pay*

	2026	2027	2028
<b>Tailor marketing outreach efforts to under-served audiences (including access memberships)</b>			
★ Create and enact marketing plan to reach identified under-served audiences		2027	ONGOING
★ Track results, modify marketing plan as needed			ONGOING
<b>Analyze support and impact for these programs</b>			
★ Analyze program use and impact vs. funding sources		2027	ONGOING
★ Create fundraising plan to support, seek funding sources			2028
<b>Address transportation barrier to attendance</b>			
★ Research transportation models from other Museums/organizations	2026		
★ Seek partnerships with transportation companies to transport students/families with access barriers		2027	ONGOING
<b>Board representation from constituent/partner organizations for Funded Admission Programs</b>			
★ Add one new Board Member each year that represents a new audience/perspective	2026		ONGOING



# KEY MEASURES OF OUR SUCCESS (2026-2028)

## Deliver Impactful & Engaging Experiences

- ★ Exhibit enhancements and new exhibits result in increased visitor satisfaction and prolonged engagement
- ★ Climber exhibit receives financial support to meet project costs
- ★ Data collected from play-based learning and wellness program participants indicates the Museum is having a positive impact supporting their children's development and well-being
- ★ Seen as a leader in early childhood education based on participation in our play-based learning programs and invitations to present at one conference annually
- ★ Two new pilot programs draw new audiences to the Museum
- ★ Database of play-based learning resources on our website see an increased number of page views year-over-year
- ★ New and refurbished exhibits meet all criteria on the play-based learning and emotional well-being checklists
- ★ School field trip bookings increase each year of this plan



# KEY MEASURES OF OUR SUCCESS (2026-2028)

## Enhance Business Practices That Support Long Term Success and Environmental Sustainability

- ★ Fundraising model produces income growth year-over-year without straining staff resources
- ★ A plan for Long Term Reserves is established and communicated, resulting in new participation in planned giving and outreach to 50 new potential donors
- ★ The Museum is a beneficiary of three community fundraisers each year
- ★ Partnerships with local businesses result in in-kind donations that lower the Museum's operating costs
- ★ Earned income revenue increases from after-hours events and monetizing play-based learning resources
- ★ Analysis of contract agreements and employee benefits leads to cost savings
- ★ Investments in facility upgrades safeguard the Museum from flooding
- ★ Marketing efforts result in increased visitors from ten towns with growth potential, three priority audiences, and Maine and Massachusetts residents
- ★ The Museum has new visibility in area restaurants, sporting arenas, and family friendly businesses
- ★ The number of social media followers grows, along with an increase in engaged comments and feedback



# KEY MEASURES OF OUR SUCCESS (2026-2028)

## Strengthen Productive Community Connections

- ★ Partnerships that are straining time/resources without having a strong positive impact are eliminated
- ★ Museum establishes six new partnerships that advance our efforts
- ★ Museum establishes guidelines for participating in community events and measures the impact of doing so
- ★ Increase in membership income and member renewal rates
- ★ Number of visitors redeeming EBT/WIC discount increases year-over-year
- ★ Number of families participating in Exploring Our Way sensory friendly program increases year-over-year
- ★ Staff trainings lead to increase in employee job satisfaction and positive visitor comments about staff interactions
- ★ Families in need benefit from a scholarship membership program and visit the Museum multiple times each year
- ★ Marketing channels see increase in subscribers, views, and interactions
- ★ There are enough free or reduced-cost bus options to serve all schools in need who want to visit the Museum
- ★ Museum hosts six artists/performers each year that represent diverse cultures
- ★ The Board of Directors has representation from a variety of industries, constituents, and partner organizations



# CMNH LONG TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>PROJECTED 2025</b>	<b>Budget 2026</b>	<b>Budget 2027</b>	<b>Budget 2028</b>
Admissions (gate)	522,900	547,800	587,900	625,800
Admissions (group)	22,600	23,200	24,800	26,500
Memberships (family)	256,700	263,100	273,600	284,500
Memberships (library)	22,700	23,900	24,500	25,100
Shop Sales & Vending	38,200	42,000	42,400	42,800
Birthday Parties	39,800	43,900	44,800	45,700
Programs	36,000	37,800	39,700	41,700
Grants & Sponsorships	285,900	424,000	200,000	202,000
Donations & Interest	82,300	83,000	87,200	91,600
Fundraising Events	295,600	295,500	298,500	301,500
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>1,602,700</b>	<b>1,784,200</b>	<b>1,623,400</b>	<b>1,687,200</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES

Salaries & Payroll Taxes	922,500	945,400	999,500	1,034,500
Insurance	102,500	111,800	118,500	125,600
Operations	153,800	156,900	160,000	163,200
Maintenance	368,800	464,900	181,800	195,800
Shop & Vending	16,600	19,400	19,600	19,800
Programs	27,500	29,300	30,200	31,100
Fundraising Events	35,600	37,000	37,400	37,800
Marketing & Development	37,300	39,200	40,000	40,800
Credit Card Processing	32,200	34,300	36,400	38,600
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>1,696,800</b>	<b>1,838,200</b>	<b>1,623,400</b>	<b>1,687,200</b>
Net Operating Income	(94,100)	(54,000)		

