



ANNUAL 2017
REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2018

SCI

**SCIENCE
CENTER
OF IOWA
& BLANK IMAX®
DOME THEATER**



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Growth, development and reflection are essential elements for us as individuals and for us as an organization. This year has brought much reflection as we prepare to look back at our past and as we celebrate and plan for the future.

We continue to ask ourselves how are we engaging the community at large? How are we reaching audiences who have traditionally not had a seat at the table? How are we involving families, individuals and our partners in innovative ways? How are we living our mission each day, in every program and exhibit, in every interaction inside of our building and across the state? And how are we truly performing the work of being your Science Center of Iowa?

There are simple ways to answer that question, but we continue to challenge ourselves to dig deeper. In this past year alone, we have added exhibits and programs that inspire individuals across the lifespan. You will see examples of that impact throughout this report.

This is critical, and we hope that can continue to support us in our journey to be the best SCI we can be for you, for your neighbors, for your community and state. Thank you for all of the ways you allow us into your lives and challenge us to dig deeper. This is where the real work begins, and we are honored that after 48 years, we can continue to do this together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.S.' with a stylized flourish.

Curt Simmons
President & CEO

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DOME THEATER

SCI 101—DID YOU KNOW?

OUR MISSION: To engage and inspire Iowans along their journey of lifelong science learning.

501(c)(3)

The Science Center of Iowa is a 501(c)(3) entity. We are independent, operating solely from money raised and earned on our behalf.



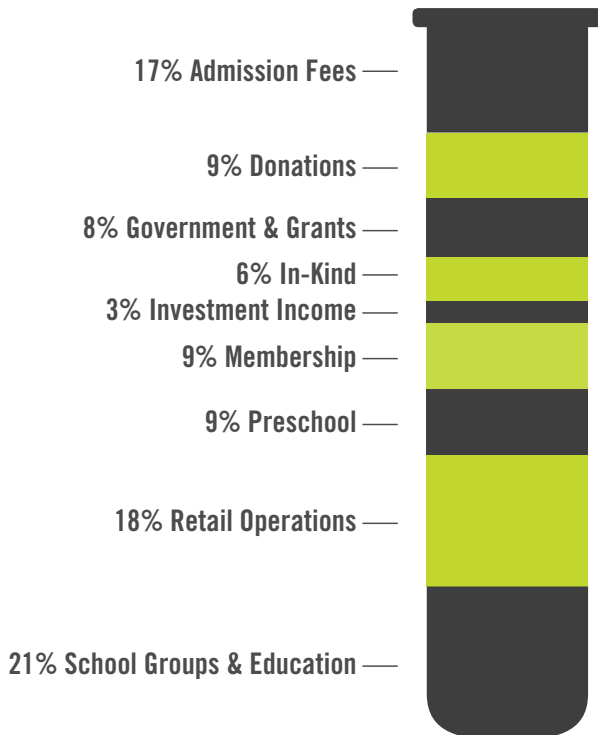
We are the Science Center of Iowa. In addition to welcoming visitors from all 99 counties and beyond, our outreach and professional development programs take STEM learning on the road, reaching tens of thousands of Iowans each year.



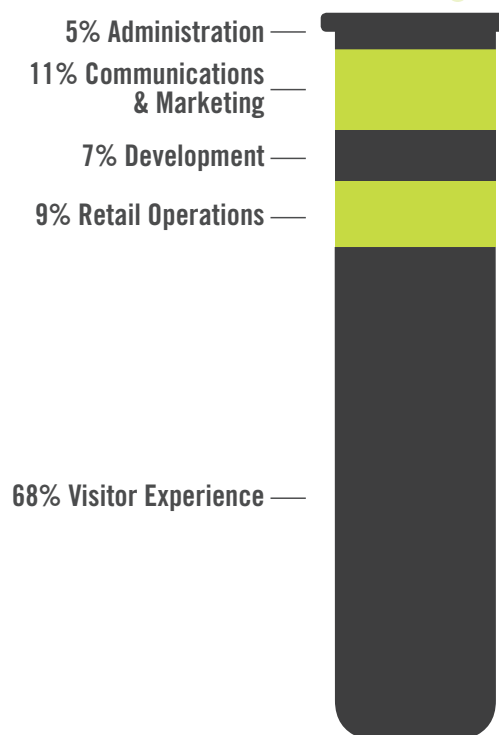
As a private, nonprofit organization, we rely on the donations of private individuals, companies and foundations to be able to achieve our mission and serve more than 300,000 individuals from across the state and country. Thank you for your support!

HERE'S HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO:

OPERATING REVENUE & SUPPORT



OPERATING EXPENSES





YOUR SUPPORT MAKES AN IMPACT

VARIETY: HELPING INSTILL WONDER & JOY IN ALL CHILDREN



Variety – The Children’s Charity has been a fierce advocate for underprivileged, at-risk and special needs children throughout the state since its inception. We are honored to partner with them on our monthly Sensory-Friendly Hours to better serve children and families and allow them to access SCI in a special way.

Sensory-Friendly Hours provide families and individuals exclusive, private access to SCI before we open, so that they are able to experience the wonder and joy in a positive manner. SCI staff adjust the environment, sound is reduced and attendance is limited. Sensory Backpacks, containing noise-reducing headphones, sunglasses, weighted blankets/stuffed animals and fidget materials, will be added in FY18-19.



Additionally, we recently made an exciting new modification to our memberships. For families that include children with special needs, we now offer a level of membership that allows better access for caregivers or aides. By reducing barriers for children and families to access SCI, we are trying to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be wowed and inspired by science!

FLINT HILLS: ENGAGING GIRLS IN STEM & BEYOND



Flint Hills Resources and the Science Center of Iowa began their partnership in 2013, when Flint Hills first sponsored tables at the Girls in Science “Meals with Mentors” dinner.

We are grateful that this partnership has grown over the last six years to encompass other Girls in Science initiatives. The Girls in Science Festival, sponsored by Flint Hills, provides workshops and opportunities for girls to engage with other female STEM professionals and learn what a job in a STEM career may look like. (Here’s a secret... It is greater than you could ever imagine!)



Flint Hills has been critical to maintaining many of our Girls in Science programs, but the partnership now encompasses much more. A Flint Hills Resources staff member was named 2015 Girls in Science Scientist of the Year, and with their staff volunteering more than 840 hours at the SCI, they have inspired countless girls in their journey of lifelong science learning.



KEMIN: INSPIRING THE MAKER IN ALL OF US

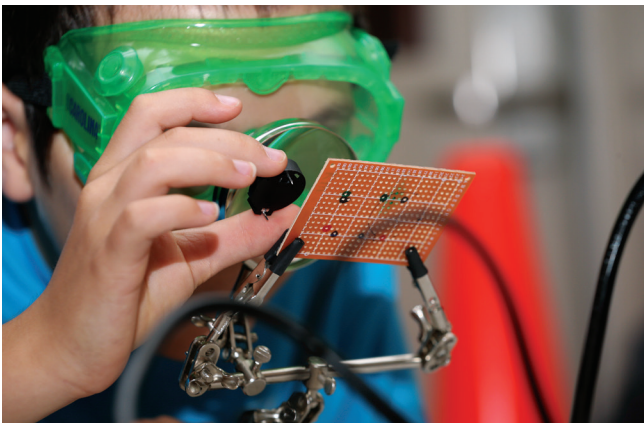
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To say we are grateful for the relationships we have maintained over the last 50 years is an understatement. Kemin Industries is one example of a relationship that allows for our ongoing success and growth.



“As a company founded in science and innovation, Kemin greatly values the presence and impact the Science Center of Iowa creates. Kemin is a proud supporter of SCI and the work it does to empower the community, especially youth, to be engaged and excited about science. The Make@SCI initiative is a perfect example of how SCI brings science to life.”

Dr. Chris Nelson, President and CEO of Kemin Industries



If you have visited SCI over the past year, it is impossible to ignore the buzz of “making.” Visitors of all ages are thinking creatively and learning new skills as part of this movement that encourages tinkering, building, experimenting and collaborating. We like to say that “it’s more than an exhibit... it’s a mindset.” Summer programming culminates each year with the Des Moines Mini Maker Faire, a celebration of this movement and mindset. 2018 marked our fifth and largest Maker Faire, with more than 3,200 visitors engaged in making firsthand. We are proud of how this initiative, with generous support from Kemin, has helped visitors foster their natural curiosity and become active participants in their learning process.



MICROSOFT: CREATING INNOVATORS

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Since opening our building downtown, much has changed in the world around us – both right outside our doors and across the globe. We are striving not only to adapt our physical space to such changes, but also to adapt our programming and approach as well. A huge step in this direction came in 2018, when we were awarded funds from Microsoft to build a new Innovation Lab. This will be a space with hands-on technology that ignites the imagination, sparks an innovative, collaborative spirit and inspires the maker, inventor, tinkerer and designer in all ages.

We know that today, more than ever, innovation is imperative. Developing skills, knowledge and understanding to uncover the innovator in everyone is at the heart of what we do. The SCI Innovation Lab will be a space where technology is available to teachers, community partners, visitors and the general public. Workshops will focus on exploring new tools and technologies, while allowing participants to experience the design cycle in a safe, supportive environment. We also will offer tech camps for youth and Tiny Tinkerers programs for our youngest SCI aficionados.



It is through this partnership that SCI continues to build into the future, cultivating 21st Century Skills, supporting workforce development and economic vitality and seeding creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism for our more than 300,000 visitors each year.





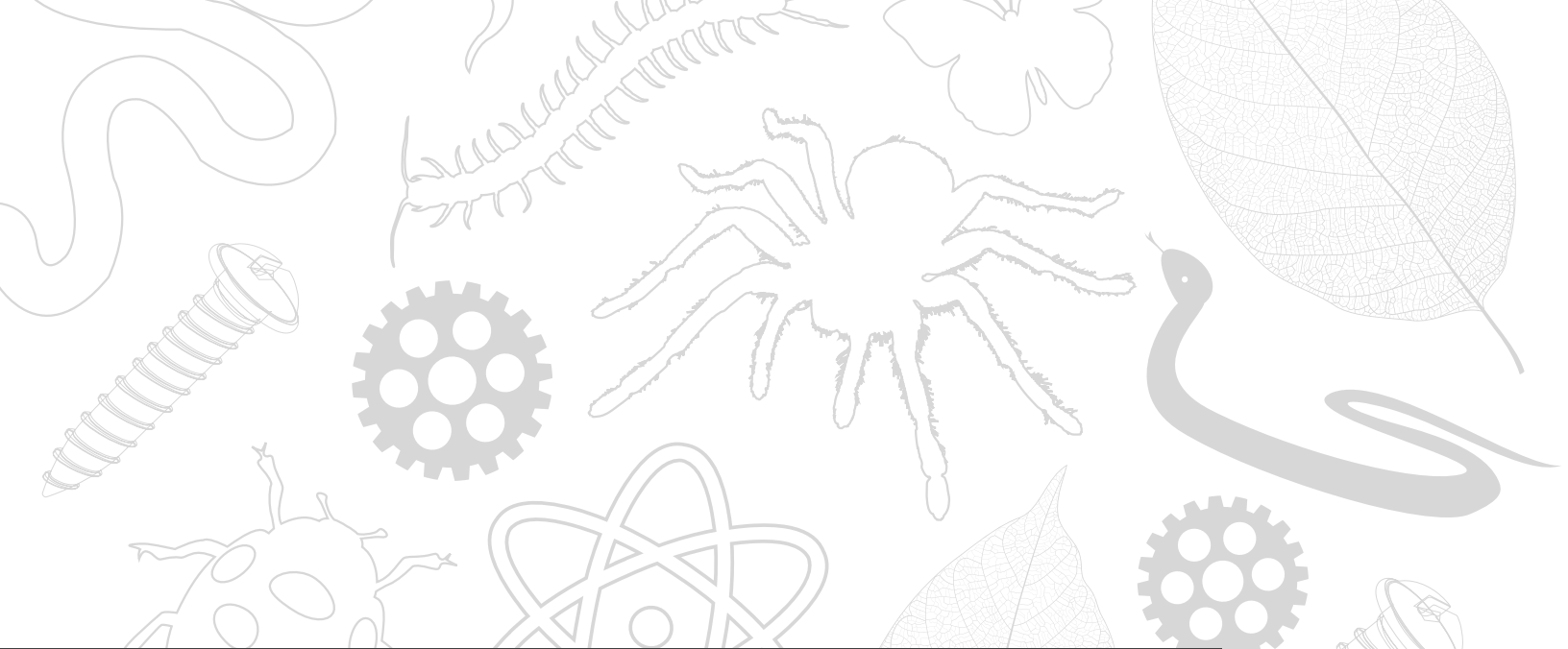
Supporting diversity, promoting inclusion, increasing access and achieving equity are all important components of the work we are doing at SCI. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be inspired by science, and because of this belief, we have become part of the iPage Program at the Science Museum of Minnesota. iPage is a leadership program for informal STEM institution professionals from across the United States, and it is designed to help leaders bring about meaningful and lasting institutional change. This transformative program has been developed and refined through multiple awards from the National Science Foundation.



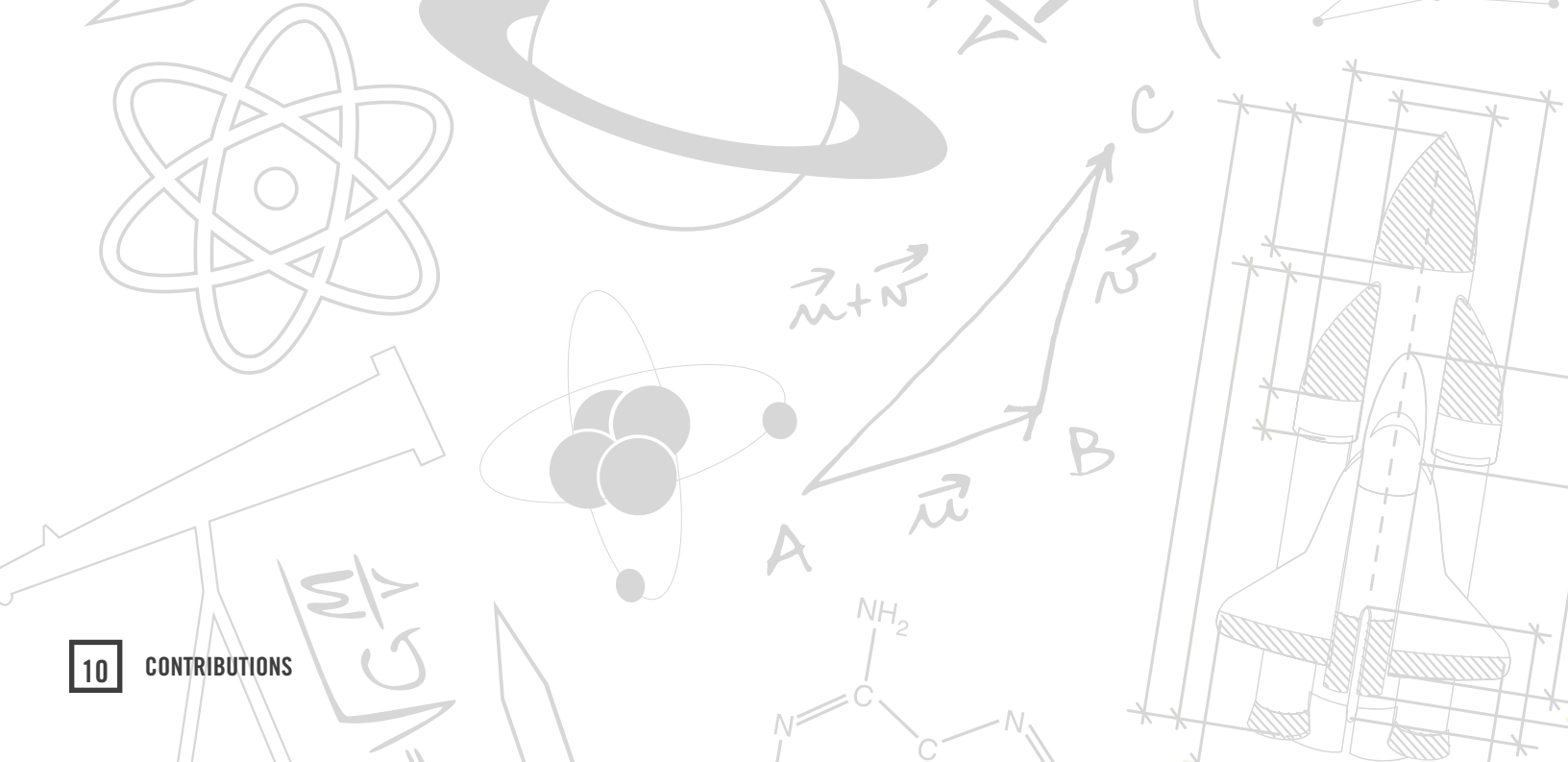
As you will read in a few pages, Kim and Jean Austen have been pioneers of promoting equity and access at SCI and have championed this effort for many years through their establishment of an accessibility fund for school children across the state.

Like the Austens, many other individuals and organizations see the value in providing access to SCI for little learners. The Judith Lindquist Fund through the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines provides funding for underserved, low income children in greater Des Moines.

While we may have been on this journey for a while now, with the addition of the iPage program, we are excited to see the impact of where we can go!



CONTRIBUTIONS



SPONSORSHIPS & GRANTS



The following contributions were made through generous support of specific projects, programs and films at the Science Center of Iowa and Blank IMAX Dome Theater between October 1, 2017, and September 30, 2018.

\$50,000 and above



\$25,000 - \$49,999



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SCI works to engage a wide community audience to develop meaningful partnerships and new initiatives that inspire curious minds of all ages. Partnerships and sponsorships from the following organizations help SCI engage and inspire lifelong learning in all of us.



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The following local governments committed a portion of their hotel/motel tax in FY 17-18:

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With sincere appreciation, the Science Center of Iowa acknowledges the extraordinary support of all our donors. Your gifts enable us to engage and inspire through programming, exhibits, events and so much more. Thank you for making this possible. We make every effort to acknowledge our donors appropriately. If we have made an error, please contact the Development Office at 515-274-6868 ext. 223 or development@sciowa.org.

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Zeke, Felix and Ezra for Californium!

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: KIRKSVILLE GIRLS



Two years ago, a small group of girls from Kirksville, MO, discovered the Science Center of Iowa's Girls in Science Initiative. Being close enough to Des Moines to pick an event here and there to attend, they jointly, with their Girls Code Club teacher, Betsy, settled on our annual Meals with Mentors event. Meals with Mentors is a special night held each fall, which brings

together girls in grades 7-12, young women studying for STEM careers and working professionals. Women and girls are able to connect over dinner and learn about each other's journey. We know that mentors make a huge impact in helping females gain the confidence to pursue their dreams, and this event aims to bridge that gap between dream and reality, ambition and actualization.

So, Betsy and the girls worked hard to raise funds to make the trip happen. While Meals with Mentors is free to all participants, they still needed funding for transportation and lodging. Not only was this night an opportunity to learn more about a future in STEM and connect to those that had traveled the path before, this also was the first time many of the girls had ever stayed in a hotel, ever been to a museum or had ever left their hometowns.

Why go through all that work? SCI was offering something invaluable... Back in northern Missouri, there aren't many women in STEM careers that the girls can look up to, from whom they can ask real questions and seek advice. While there are women professionals in education back home, participating in Meals with Mentors allowed them the understanding that they, too, could be scientists, engineers and architects. Through networking at the event and participating in the program, they were able to see representations of themselves in these careers and had the unique opportunity to reflect on who they are and who they would like to become.

In Memory

Daniel Bartlett
– In memory of Feisal Sayeed
Merron and Albert Hart
– In memory of Mike Austen
Dorothy and Harlan "Bud" Hockenber
– In memory of Bill Conyers

Diane and Bruce Janvrin
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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: KIM AUSTEN



Kim Austen has seen the evolution of the Science Center of Iowa from a very personal vantage point. He has been involved with SCI for about 20 years, serving on the board of directors TWO times,

including back when SCI was located in Greenwood Park (in the “old building”).

Kim’s love for SCI and its mission is apparent, especially when he talks about how his family has grown up with the science center. Now, a grandfather to three girls, the programs and services offered have become even more meaningful and significant. Like many girls, his granddaughters dream of being princesses – and that’s alright with him as long as they grow up to be princess scientists!

Having watched his children (and now grandchildren) learning about the magic of science at SCI, Kim and his wife Jean have invested to ensure that all children have the opportunity to let science capture their minds and imaginations.

During the recession when schools were cutting money for field trips, Kim wanted to ensure children would still have the opportunity to visit SCI. To that end, the Austens established an annual fund to reduce the cost for school visits. This fund allows for students, often for the first time, to be able to experience the Science Center of Iowa.

The Austens also support SCI’s Girls in Science Initiative and early childhood education programs, because they are passionate about getting all children involved in STEM.

“I love the place!” said Austen. “I am continually amazed and humbled to see staff reach out to elementary students across the state, and I am very proud of the work that SCI is doing, particularly for girls to get engaged in STEM. I never doubt that SCI is spending resources wisely and using our dollars to really enhance STEM education around state.”

SCI'S BIG BLAST GALA



Each year, SCI engages more than 320,000 children, school groups and adults in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through interactive exhibits, live programs, IMAX films, special events, classes and camps. SCI's Annual Fundraising Event and Auction contributes more than \$200,000 to these vast opportunities. Special thanks to Ed Wilson, who served as the 2018 Annual Event Master of Ceremonies.

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DAGNEY PASKACH



Dagney Paskach, a junior at Iowa State University currently studying Industrial Engineering, grew up in Ames and first became involved with the Science Center of Iowa through visits with play groups as a child. Fast-forward to 2012, and Dagney was asked to help with FIRST LEGO League's Regional building competition. Since then, Dagney has racked up more than 300 volunteer hours (and counting)! It is

here, through her many hours of helping others, that she discovered her passion for informal STEM learning, which she will continue to pursue through a master's program in education.

Through the years, Dagney has continued to be involved at SCI because she shares its passion for lifelong learning. She appreciates SCI's drive towards continuous improvement and loves that every time she volunteers or simply walks around the exhibits, she learns something new. Dagney stresses that SCI is not only beneficial for young children to begin their STEM experience, but also for teens and adults to explore STEM throughout their lives as well. The connections she has made and experiences she has had at SCI have helped to push her further toward hands-on STEM education. Volunteering at SCI has taught her that, while it is important to have a mentor or role model, it is even more important not to fear being the first to try something. She encourages all SCI visitors and volunteers to find the opportunity to be involved as much as possible – and to try everything once.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: THE HESSELTINE FAMILY



SCI prides itself in being a resource for all families, all ages and all different ways of learning about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The Hesselstine Family discovered that firsthand when they enrolled their daughter, Mayleigh, in the SCI Preschool after first homeschooling.

Kristiana always knew she wanted to homeschool her kids. Unfortunately for her, Mayleigh had other plans! Struggling to keep Mayleigh engaged in learning was a challenge, and after talking to her good friend, SCI Preschool Director Amber Forrest, she decided to enroll her oldest daughter at SCI four days a week. Within the first couple of weeks, Kristiana began to see how much Mayleigh loved school! She loved to come home and talk about everything she had learned that day (like when water freezes and then melts) and did “experiments” by filling up jars and putting them in the fridge. Mayleigh learned to be excited by everyday activities, such as walking outside and looking at the trees – and what Kristiana learned was that *how* her kids learned was as important as *what* they learned.

Kristiana was able to apply this knowledge as she successfully returned to homeschooling. She credits this shift in her ability to teach and in her children's ability to engage in homeschooling to the resources provided by SCI. She learned how to make learning fun through experimentation and the ability to witness the beauty of the world around them.

Now, their family of seven spends time learning both at home and at SCI. Sawyer, currently enrolled in preschool, can sometimes feel overwhelmed by how much fun she has at school, but her teachers help her cope with her feelings and focus her love of nature so that she, too, can find that balance of play and learning. That, Kristiana says, is the most unique thing about SCI. The teachers care about each child – what they like, what they don't like – which is hard even for her as a mom of five! The impact extends beyond the classroom, as Kristiana has seen how having her children involved at SCI has shifted how they play at home. The fluid line between play and learning is something she now knows and works to help foster on a daily basis.

SCI is a family affair for the Hesselstines. The whole family loves the trips because there is something fun and educational for every age in every room. SCI's commitment to embodying a love of learning starts early, but it doesn't end at any age – and the Hesselstines are grateful for that. As a large family, the price of membership was one they could afford.

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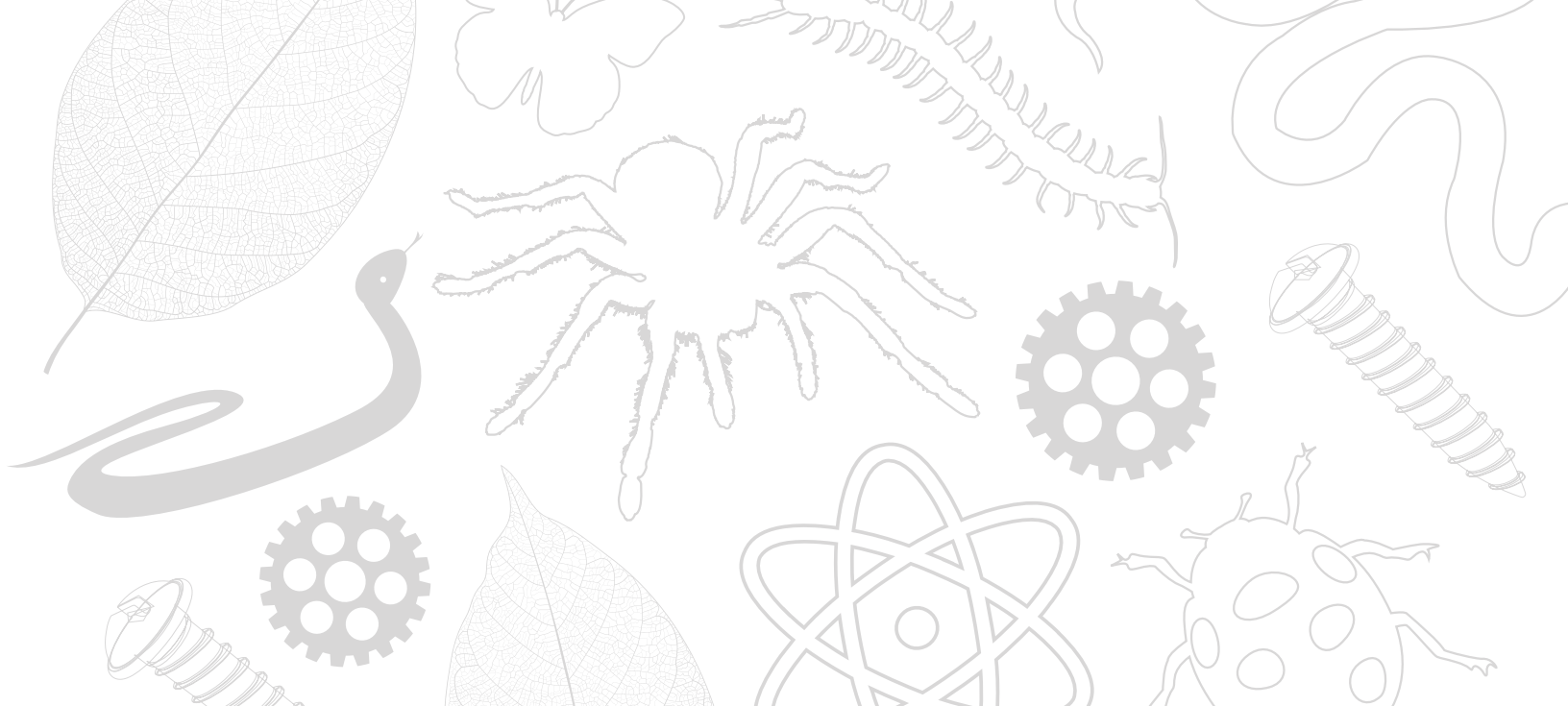


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