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The Scott Family Amazeum exists to spark and nurture the curious and creative spirit of diverse communities, supporting the development of innovative thinking necessary to meet challenges of the future.



#### **ABOUT THE ZING**

Like a moment of discovery, the spark of creativity, the power of curiosity and the impact of learning, the Amazeum Zing represents the “a-ha” moments central to our mission to provide meaningful, integrated, interactive learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, art and math.



A man with short brown hair, wearing glasses and a black face mask with a white polka-dot pattern, is holding up a small, light-colored object with both hands. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a lanyard with a badge. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a museum or gallery. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter.

**“Necessity  
is the  
mother of  
invention.”**

-Plato

# Dear Scott Family Amazeum Community,

As someone who relishes looking past the obvious for opportunities to learn, grow and innovate, I begin this letter by stating the obvious. This year is unlike any other, at least in my memory. In so many ways, it feels like a tale of two different years.

Our fiscal year started on a trajectory fueled by increased attendance, innovative on-site programs and experiences, and anticipation of celebrating our 5th birthday in July. Our work in the community continued to build relationships with diverse audiences, business partners and creatives.

In late January, we hosted a statewide Maker Summit in Downtown Springdale. I love this event as it encapsulates our inspiration, dedication and aspiration of building and sustaining a maker ecosystem throughout Arkansas and beyond. With the support of the Windgate Foundation, Tyson Family Foundation, Arts Center of the Ozarks, Downtown Springdale Alliance and many other businesses, the Summit brought together thought leaders, entrepreneurs and creatives from throughout the state and nation. We were fortunate to

have discussions around supporting the work of Makers and Doers, on innovation and creativity, and listened to amazing keynote speakers like Dale Dougherty, founder of Maker Media and the grand champion of the Maker Movement around the world. We wrapped up this fantastic day of collaboration and conversation excited to build on the community spirit generated by those in attendance. The energy was palpable, electric even.

By March, the world changed in countless ways for all of us.

One of the main threads woven into everything we do, though, remained strong - community. Even after making the difficult, yet necessary, decision to close our doors, the Amazeum team and this community continued to do wonderful things in support of each other. We sent care notes to people in quarantine. We assembled science kits that provided a few moments of playful exploration for families facing food insecurity. We leveraged our talents to create online libraries of digital experiences for families to explore whenever and wherever they were. The relationships built with makers led to rapid prototyping

and creating personal protective equipment at a critical time. We greatly appreciate the hard work of families, businesses, makers, and other organizations to support the museum in so many different ways as well. As I write this, I was told of a young guest who contributed to the museum out of his piggy bank to help support the team of people he loves.

We know challenges will continue as we look ahead. The pathway forward will be twisty and unpredictable. But I think we also know that when communities come together, nothing is impossible. If I had to make a wager, I'd bet on Northwest Arkansas, this Amazeum team, and our wonderful families EVERY. SINGLE. TIME. NWA - you amaze me every day. I look forward to seeing how we all tackle this upcoming year head-on, together.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and just as important, stay curious,



**Sam Dean**  
Executive Director



# Active & Vibrant Museum

“Creativity was born out of necessity, because I didn’t have a lot of things to play with.”

- Ann Makosinski  
*inventor and public speaker*



Sustaining a vibrant museum experience at the Scott Family Amazeum necessitates discovering unique, interactive exhibits from across the country, or, in the case of *Salvage Swings*, right in our backyard.

The relationship between the Amazeum and the University of Arkansas grows each year with regular collaboration between the Amazeum team, faculty and students often resulting in temporary exhibitions of prototypes and permanent exhibits from student architects, engineers and designers.

“We learn a lot from our collaborations with the U of A,” says Erik Smith, director of exhibits and facilities. “And they learn a ton from us, especially when working on interactive experiences and designs created for play.” Working with students led to connecting with faculty and the greater U of A design community, which provided an opportunity to enhance the Playscape with the installation of *Salvage Swings*. Designed by Arkansas-based Somewhere Studio lead architects Jessica Colangelo and Charles

“It is playful, well-designed and illustrates how creativity applied to common materials results in unique objects.”

Sharpless and fabricated in the Fay Jones School of Architecture Fab Lab, *Salvage Swings* won the 2019 City of Dreams annual international architectural design competition in New York City. “What excites us

most about this project,” says Colangelo, “is that it is an opportunity to think about environmental stewardship, waste and having fun all at the same time!”

*Salvage Swings* consists of 12 modules constructed from cross-laminated timber (CLT) shipping pallets

salvaged during the construction of the Adohi Residence Hall at the University of Arkansas. Arranged into a triangular pavilion, each module contains an individual swing and frames a view of the landscape surrounding the Amazeum.

“We are so thrilled to see *Salvage Swings* installed at the Amazeum. Work like this only comes to life when it is being used and enjoyed,” says Charles Sharpless. “Collaborating with the Amazeum provides such a valuable opportunity for emerging designers to get to see their

work put to the test by an eager and enthusiastic audience!”

“*Salvage Swings* is a wonderful addition to our Playscape,” says Smith, “It is playful, well-designed and illustrates how creativity applied to common materials results in unique objects. This directly aligns with our philosophy of tinkering and making where we encourage experimentation with materials to incite creativity while leaving the authenticity of the materials themselves exposed.”

“The selection of the Scott Family Amazeum as the ongoing home for *Salvage Swings* furthers our desire to be a hub of innovative art and science integrations,” says Sam Dean, Amazeum executive director. “Our collaborations with makers in residence, artists, architects, engineers, technologists and students in our creative studio result in elevating the concept of art as organic, accessible and shareable, connecting a diverse maker community in Northwest Arkansas and beyond. We are grateful for our partnerships with the U of A School of Architecture, the School of Engineering and the Patti Johnson Wilson Foundation for supporting this work.”

FISCAL YEAR JUL 1, 2019 – JUN 30, 2020

185,583

Total Attendance

78,614

Total member visits

5,992

Member households

14,792

Priceless Nights attendance





# Amazeum Anywhere

“Experiences are everything. And businesses must create experiences that mean something. If necessity is the mother of invention, then vision is the father of innovation.”

- Brian Solis

*digital analyst, speaker,  
anthropologist and author*





In any other year, taking the Scott Family Amazeum's brand of interactive learning anywhere meant physically packing up activities. The Amazeum team can be found at the opening of a new park in Bentonville, a neighborhood event in Springdale, a STEAM night in Rogers, a festival in Fayetteville, or any number of off-site locations throughout Northwest Arkansas.

But this wasn't like any other year.

Right as the museum began preparing spring and summer engagements with the community in parks, streets and neighborhoods, COVID-19 became a reality and the Amazeum team quickly pivoted to meet a curious, creative community where they were – online.

"COVID-19 set in motion an interesting turn of events for us," says Paul Stolt, Amazeum marketing manager. "We decided to make as many of our interactive, hands-on experiences available online to maintain a connection with our members, guests, and, as it turned out, become connected to people throughout the United States and the world."

"It resembled building an airplane as it rumbled down the runway,"

says Sam Dean, Amazeum executive director. "The team came together to create the parts, assemble them, and prepare for a flight of undetermined length. Fortunately, Cox Communications and the Walton Family Foundation climbed on board and built enough runway for us to successfully take off." The Amazeum temporarily closed on March 13, and by March 20, Amazeum YOU left the runway with a handful of videos created by the Amazeum team.

Amazeum YOU videos featured Amazeum team members facilitating hands-on learning experiences using common household materials.

As schools closed and virtual learning became the norm, educators and parents turned to Amazeum YOU to augment and enhance learning from home. The Amazeum team continued to create video content and produce activity guides to support learners in any educational environment.

"Amazeum YOU was a learning experience for us," Stolt says. "But it mirrored how we operate

by taking an idea and exploring where else we can apply this new knowledge to engage with greater numbers of people." Before the pandemic, expanding our repertoire to include virtual opportunities

for engagement was an opportunity to be explored. COVID-19 made it a necessity.

After the museum reopened with limited capacity, Amazeum YOU continues to influence how the Amazeum team

engages with a curious, creative community through virtual camps, Unfield trips, educational programs, educator professional development, and maker community events. Amazeum YOU established an online presence that enhances our ability to connect with new communities and audiences that can be a challenge to reach.

"Connecting with older kids is an exciting direction for us going forward," says Dean. "We know they're digital, so we're developing a platform that reaches into where they already are."

**“We decided to make as many of our interactive, hands-on experiences available online.”**

MAR 20 – JUN 30, 2020

**519,442**

**Total webpage visits\***

\*Fiscal year Jul. 1, 2019 – Jun. 30, 2020



**10,787**

**Amazeum YOU  
webpage visits**



**4,935**

**YouTube views**

**70**

**Amazeum YOU  
videos created**

# Creative Studio

“Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father.”

- Roger Von Oech  
speaker, conference organizer,  
author, and toy-maker



Playful exploration brings guests to the Amazeum to make discoveries, ask questions, and better understand the connections between science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) in the world around them. The guest experience at the museum is built around exhibits that promote investigation and inquiry with just enough whimsy to incite a playful response.

An increasing number of exhibits are designed, developed, prototyped and perfected in the Amazeum Fabrication Shop. “Our team focuses on creating experiences that align with our mission to support and inspire a curious, creative community,” says Erik Smith, Amazeum director of exhibits and facilities. “We look for opportunities to work with creatives outside the museum, but we know that we can leverage the talents of our own team to make exceptional, interactive experiences right here.”

Creating exhibits destined to be playfully explored by children and adults requires talent, time and temperament. “We have the talent in house to design and build almost anything,” says Sam Dean, Amazeum executive director. “And if we don’t, we can lean into our network of makers and creatives

to give us a hand.” Temperament is a necessary element. Creating exhibits for the Amazeum requires a child-like sense of wonder, a tinkerer’s curiosity, and a maker mindset. Fortunately, there is no shortage of these traits.

Collaboration among the fabrication team resulted in a new experience

**“Because the sensors are installed on the walls and the floor is level, guests of any ability can interact at their own pace and infuse their own creativity into the experience to activate the sounds here at the Amazeum.”**

in the walkway above General Mill’s Lift, Load and Haul. Inspired by musical stairways, “Walk this Way” provides a level of physicality, interactivity and inclusivity that most musical stairways lack. Because the sensors are installed on the walls and the floor is level, guests of any ability can interact at their own pace and infuse their own creativity

into the experience to activate the sounds here at the Amazeum.

“Walk this Way” started as an electronic piano keyboard. “We wanted guests to be able to change sounds so they could explore, discover and engage their curiosity,” says Jason Quail, Amazeum experimental projects developer. The team started building prototypes and quickly realized that it would be more interactive to make the sounds a mystery. Quail, Maker in Residence Eugene Sargent, and Amazeum Lead Exhibits Developer Dustin Griffith designed and built a control panel that not only allows guests to select one or two buttons at a time to create over 100 unique sounds, but also provides a glimpse through a clear window into the technology that makes the exhibit work.

“We could have easily covered up the circuit boards, wiring, and LED display,” says Smith. “But that’s not who we are. We want people to not just engage and play, but investigate and activate their imaginations. By pulling back the curtain on our exhibits, we make the science, technology, engineering and art visible. Hopefully, that inspires curiosity about other things that seem ‘magical.’”

#### ARKANSAS MAKER SUMMIT – JAN 20, 2020

Arkansas Maker Summit, presented by the Windgate Foundation, gathered makers & educators to explore how the Maker Movement impacts our future. Featuring keynote speaker, Dale Dougherty.

**212**  
Attendees

**30**  
Presenters

**13**  
Community  
Sponsors

**3**  
Venues in  
Springdale

**1**  
Father of the  
Maker Movement



# Education Innovation

“Because we  
imagine, we can  
have invention  
and technology.  
It’s actually play,  
not necessity,  
that is the mother  
of invention.”

- Alison Gopnik

*professor of psychology and  
affiliate professor of philosophy at  
the University of California, Berkeley*



Diversity, equity, access and inclusion in STEM education begins with understanding and access. And access begins with creating a safe, welcoming entry point.

Educators, researchers and businesses are all working to increase the number of girls and young women studying engineering. The desire to, in effect, rebrand engineering to appeal to female students led to a multi-year collaboration between the New York Hall of Science (NYSci), The Tech Interactive in San Jose, California (Tech), and the Scott Family Amazeum to research innovative methods to engage girls 7 to 14 in engineering.

“Girls need an entry point. They need a ‘why,’” says Mindy Porter, Amazeum director of education. “The question this research project wanted to answer is: ‘Does wrapping an engineering activity in a narrative engage girls early and sustain interest?’”

The teams at NYSci and the Tech, nationally acclaimed museums

that lean heavily into engineering, realized early on that they needed a partner to help them think differently about engaging young learners. “We wanted to work with people who were doing good work in other places,” says Dorothy Bennett, NYSci director of creative pedagogy.

“They wanted a museum that was different to help them think differently,” says Porter. The audience at the Amazeum skews younger, and the approach to engineering is less structured and more open-ended. At the Amazeum, an understanding

of engineering begins in the 3M Tinkering Hub where children discover materials, tools, structures, and the engineering process through playful exploration driven by curiosity and creativity.

“Working with the Amazeum helps us think about engineering in a much more active and creative kind of way...”

“Working with the Amazeum helps us think about engineering in a much more active and creative kind of way rather than giving kids a closed-ended engineering challenge to solve,” says Suzy Letourneau, NYSci research associate. The collaboration with

the Amazeum changed the impetus for engaging young girls in engineering from starting with a defined problem to solve to encouraging them to discover a problem they personally want to pursue.

Data from the study at all three museums reveals that the inclusion of a narrative not only increased the level of engagement, but also empathy. “There’s an emotional impact to finding a solution that not only solves the problem but does so in a way that accounts for the end users’ experience,” says Joel Gordon, Amazeum making and tinkering manager.

While the research focused on girls, there are implications for engineering education regardless of gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. “Engineering is so decontextualized and abstract, separated from problems people really care about,” Bennett says. Setting engineering problems within a context that includes characters and settings that are relatable to diverse populations makes engineering accessible to everyone and leads to safe, welcoming and relevant entry point for diverse student populations.

FISCAL YEAR JUL 1, 2019 – JUN 30, 2020

**7,379**

Participants in Early Learner Workshops

**1,069**

Teachers participated in Professional Development

**13,000**

Participants in Unfield Trips





# COVID-19 Response

“Necessity may well be called the mother of invention, but calamity is the test of integrity.”

- Samuel Richardson  
*writer and printer*





It's been a remarkable year.

Teaming with two of America's premier science and technology museums as part of a National Science Foundation grant to address a critical need in engineering education furthered the Amazeum's national reputation as a museum that thinks differently.

Pushing the boundaries in our Fabrication Shop continued to create unique interactive, accessible, educational experiences for diverse audiences through collaborations with the Amazeum team and a growing Maker Ecosystem.

Launching an online platform within days of determining that the best course of action to address a growing pandemic was to close the museum, expanded the reach of Amazeum-style learning.

Maintaining an active and vibrant museum experience facilitated through partnerships that support a creative community within Northwest Arkansas enhanced our ability to continue bringing unique experiences to guests.

It's been an amazing year, in spite of the unforeseen challenges.

"We try not to overuse the word amazing here," says Shannon Dixon, director of development and communications. "It's just baked into our DNA. We do amazing every day. But as COVID-19 necessitated responses in a number of areas, the one response that was truly amazing was that of our team to support the community." The reality of COVID-19, the temporary closure, and the accompanying uncertainty, necessitated difficult decisions, but the decision to create ways to provide amazing moments for the community was easy. The every day amazing experience that guests expect from the Amazeum relies on team members in education and guest services who build relationships with members and guests.

Amazeum team members shared their talents in Amazeum YOU videos introducing activities. They connected with member households through "miss you" notes of encouragement that frequently resulted in a return message of hopeful intention to come back and play when the

museum reopened. The team sent 350 "thinking of you" cards to residents of six long-term care facilities, and brightened the day for residents at NWA Children's Shelter, long-term care facilities, and other open spaces through creative chalk messages in parking lots.

The team put their maker skills to work and handmade masks. Most impactful was the development and creation of over 4,000 Family Adventure Kits in partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, IDK? Cafe and Arkansas Community Foundation

that were distributed with free meals for families facing food insecurity.

"The Amazeum is born from the community and integral to its well-being," Dixon continues. "Our mission centers on building a creative, curious community. COVID-19 presented a challenge to carrying on our mission, but our team found opportunity in the situation to find new ways to stay connected."

**“COVID-19 presented a challenge to carrying on our mission, but our team found opportunity in the situation to find new ways to stay connected.”**

**2019**  
Total Attendance

**275,185**

**2020**  
Total Attendance\*

**94,758**

66% decrease

\*This total includes projections for Nov. & Dec. 2020

**528**  
Total cards  
created &  
distributed

**4,000+**  
Family  
Adventure Kits  
distributed

# 5 Years of Amazeum

“Necessity  
is the  
mother  
of taking  
chances.”

- Mark Twain

*American writer, humorist,  
entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer*



While other museums start from a collection of items, topic of interest or personal passion, children's museums grow from community, civic organizations and parents with a dream to build a place for discovery, exploration and learning. The Scott Family Amazeum celebrated five years in operation on July 15, 2020, but the work to build the museum began over a decade ago.

"You have to have a great collective vision and connect with the broader community," says Sam Dean, Amazeum executive director. The group dreaming of a children's museum in Northwest Arkansas that eventually became the Amazeum had both.

Chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2006 as the Children's Museum of Northwest Arkansas, it soon became apparent that the community was looking for more than a children's museum.

One of the non-profit's early board members, Roger Thomas, recalls continuing to work through the recession in 2008. "We were kind of treading water until 2011," Thomas says. "Then Walmart got involved, and the Walton Family Foundation

got involved, and the supplier community got involved. We're going, 'you know what? This is going to happen.' I'll always remember Eric and Elda Scott and the Scott Family getting involved and when that happened the rest is history." Jim Demeree, whose mother founded Bootheel Youth Museum in Southern Missouri in the 1990s, was an early proponent. The Bentonville Noon Rotary Club supported the idea early on as well.

**“Our future is about making STEAM-based experiences available to anyone at any age on a regular basis . . .”**

The initial group kept the dream alive through community outreach programs, community dialog, and sheer force of will. "They cleared those early hurdles that could stop a project and kept moving forward and were able to get some seed support," says Dean.

Under the leadership of the original organization the dream transformed from a children's museum into a world-class interactive

museum focused on STEAM-rich learning experiences in an environment of playful exploration.

The Amazeum continues to grow and expand to meet the needs of the community. "The partnerships built in the early days with our signature sponsors - 3M, General Mills, The Hershey Company, ViacomCBS Consumer Products, Walmart Inc. and The Walton Family Foundation - made this happen at a level beyond expectations," says Dean. "Those companies, our donors, members and guests believe in the power of education and experiential learning we create at the Amazeum. They enable us to dream big, focus our energy and make the vision a reality."

The Amazeum continues to dream and explore opportunities to expand beyond its roots and create innovative ways to connect with pre-teens, teens and adults of all ages while continuing to be the place where children explore, wonder, discover and learn together. "Our future is about making STEAM-based experiences available to anyone at any age on a regular basis - a key part of your everyday life," says Dean.

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#### FIRST 5 YEARS JUL 5, 2015 - JUL 5, 2020

**1,261,063**  
Visitors in first 5 years

**501,982**  
Member visits

**92,688**  
Attended  
Priceless Nights

**127,561**  
Participants in  
Unfield Trips



# Thank You Donors

You helped us continue to spread the joy of curiosity and creativity throughout Northwest Arkansas and beyond.

3W Magazine

Enrique Acuna & Monica Herrera

Bill & Karen Akins

Anonymous Donor

Arkansas Children's Northwest -  
Pediatric Healthcare Sponsor

Arkansas Community Foundation

Arkansas Economic  
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Charitable Foundation

Walmart Foundation

Walton Family Foundation

Keri & Shane Wilkinson

Windgate Foundation

Whitney Yoder

Tom & Cindy Youngblood

# Financials

## Revenue and Support

	FY 2020	FY 2019
Admissions and Memberships	1,003,862	1,400,255
Contributions and Grants*	1,652,518	676,624
Gift Shop and Café sales	274,267	431,788
Less: Cost of Goods Sold	143,365	233,809
Net Gift Shop and Café Sales	130,902	197,979

Special Events	162,401	180,889
Investment Income	52,725	84,134
Misc Income	15,215	219
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>3,017,623</b>	<b>2,540,099</b>

## Expenses

Program Expenses	3,289,528	3,317,500
Core Support	1,056,432	1,108,766
Fundraising	334,629	344,017

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,680,589</b>	<b>4,770,283</b>
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Change in Net Assets	-982,015	-2,230,184
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<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>25,001,510</b>	<b>27,231,694</b>
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<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>24,019,495</b>	<b>25,001,510</b>
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## Board of Directors

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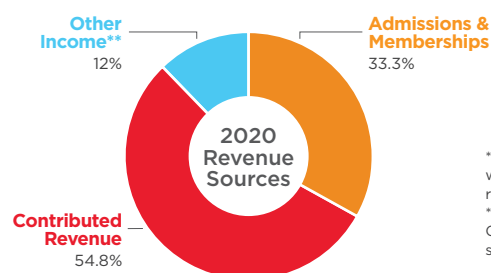
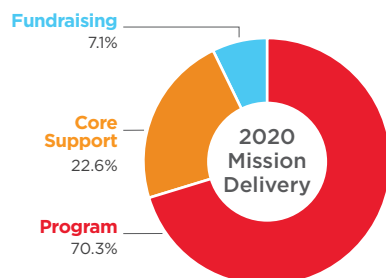
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Kalene Griffith, *President, Visit Bentonville*

Nancy Leake, *Downtown Bentonville Revitalization*



\*Please note that \$1,466,222 received in previous years was released in FY20 and \$375,436 was moved to restricted funds for future use.

\*\*Other income includes earned income from Curiosity Corner, Zing Cafe, birthday parties, camps, workshops, special events, facility rentals and investment income.



1009 Museum Way | Bentonville, AR 72712 | [amazeum.org](http://amazeum.org)

Special thanks to the Scott Family and our Signature Sponsors

