

annual report 2023



PRATT MUSEUM

The Homer Society of Natural History, Inc.



The mission of the Pratt Museum is to strengthen relationships between people and place through stories relevant to Kachemak Bay.

board of directors

Linda Rowell/*President*

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Yarrow Hinnant/*Botanical Exhibits Curator*

Keetra Dixon/*Curator of Lifelong Learning Experiences*

Chase Warren/*Facilities & Exhibits Manager*

Whitney Harness/*Visitor Services, Store &*

Communications Manager

Martha Altman/*Museum Services Manager*

Shawn Jackinsky/*Head Gardener*



Privilege to Serve



The year 2023 was a time of assessment and transition at the Pratt. We started the year preparing for an accreditation review. This included a complete overhaul of the Collection Policy by the Collections Committee. With the review complete and awaiting results, the search for a new executive director began. It was extremely gratifying to see the enormous amount of community involvement that went into both of these major tasks.

In July, a new Executive Director joined the Pratt and we learned that we had been reaccredited. The new Executive Director jumped right into tying up loose ends, planning for the future, and hiring several new talented team members.

As usual, outstanding exhibits graced the Pratt's walls. In the spring, the Community Gallery housed a group of paintings from the collection by local artists, and the Main Gallery displayed some of the quilts crafted and donated by the Kachemak Bay Quilters.

Guests visiting during summer months were treated to an outstanding new exhibit - *In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories*, a cross-disciplinary project dealing with change through narrative and art. The walls of the Community Gallery were transformed into an exhibition celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Pier One Theater. The year ended with an exhibition of Deland Anderson's art work in the Main Gallery, titled *Patterns in Place*. He also offered several classes inviting students to try out dot painting for themselves.

The revitalization of the botanical garden continued thanks to a generous donation from the Patrons of the Pratt Society. Numerous classes and tours were offered in the garden and along the forest trails. Those, along with the summer harbor tours, saw increased participation.

The Museum Store reopened right before the holidays, and the lucky winner of this year's Kachemak Bay Quilters 'Alaskan Wildflowers' Quilt Raffle was drawn. The year drew to a close with a festive chamber music concert in the Main Gallery. As usual, the Pratt continued to provide a wide array of mission-centered programming to an appreciative community.

It has been my privilege to serve on the Board of Directors for the last eight years and I wish this gem of the community much success in finding new leadership in 2024.

Board President,

Andrea L. Rowell

Transformation

We are still here! After spending the last two and a half years of minimal operations, the Pratt Museum was open to the public and we welcomed guests to the galleries and grounds. This year locals, school groups, individual travelers, and tour groups came back. With renewed energy the galleries and grounds came alive with engaging offerings.

The year started off slowly. The Museum opened in March, offering community gatherings. We invited the public to offer public comment on a campus enhancement plan and started a 3D film series.

In May, exciting outdoor workshops were launched, and a cross-disciplinary exhibit entitled *In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories* open for the summer season. As visitors enjoyed the exhibits and offerings indoors, programs and garden tours were in full swing during the summer.

Summer saw the biggest transformation as the Museum welcomed a new Executive Director to lead the path forward. With over twenty-three of experience in the museum field, Patricia Relay brought forth plans and efforts to not only sustain grants but to build up earned and contributed revenues. Building on summer efforts and utilizing her connections, Relay recruited local artist Deland Anderson to present a retrospective of his work, entitled *Patterns in Place*, which was on display in the main gallery from October 3 to December 29th.

As the summer season waned, fall was a time to actively and strategically reopen the Museum Store. With the realization that funds were limited, the goal was to reopen the store by utilizing the furniture and fixtures from the previous store. This allowed for minimal initial outlay of funds and along with the time and attention of dedicated staff laid the foundation for success.



From the Executive Director If I could pick three words to describe the last year, I would say determination, dedication and devotion. The Pratt Museum team has been devoted to making the Museum a safe, welcoming and inviting place for visitors. We maintained consistent hours of operations, reopened the Museum Store, connected with tour operators, and hosted school groups. As the new year unfolds the team will continue to embrace each new day with the same level of enthusiasm and commitment.

Patricia Relay

Collections

Collections Committee Report The collections committee has had a very busy year! This dedicated professional group undertook the complete revision of the collection policy as we headed into the accreditation process. The accreditation team was very impressed by the thoroughness of this endeavor. The committee at the same time produced a list of issues needing further review. This list included concerns about loan agreements for museum collection items housed outside the museum, the rules for use of and attribution of collection materials in published works, and the care of culturally sensitive materials. The committee continues to work on these issues without the professional advice of a collections manager. The committee urges the Board to move quickly in continuing the search for a competent individual to fill this role.



ABOVE Collections committee members meeting at the Pratt Museum in January 2024. L-R: Marilyn Sigman, Yarrow Hinnant, Linda Rowell, Kathy Smith, & Janet Klein. Not pictured: Lee Post.

BELOW Detail from Homestead Exhibit in the People & Place Gallery.



Under the committee's guidance, archival materials concerning the Barefooters, a narwhal tusk, and a quilt celebrating the Kachemak Bay State Park's 50th anniversary were added to the collection. Sadly, some other items could not be accepted due to lack of storage space and our inability to adequately care for them. The committee thanks every individual who has made a generous offering to the museum.

Commemorative Quilt accession approved by the Collections Committee in 2023.



Exhibits

Exhibitions in 2023 began in February with *Community Quilts of the Pratt Museum*, an installation showcasing natural history quilts that have been thematically integrated into exhibits in the past. The community gallery was host to multiple exhibitions, including *A Tale of Two Murrelets* during the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival and a retrospective showing celebrating 50 years of Pier One Theatre. During the summer, the main gallery transformed to host *In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories*. In October, visitors were treated to the retrospective exhibit, *Patterns in Place*, by local artist Deland Anderson.

This year's exhibits, both permanent and temporary, were impacted by the absence of a curator. Permanent exhibits remained unchanged aside from maintenance, and temporary exhibits were initially scheduled only through the summer. However, the new Executive Director prioritized the exhibit calendar, and was able to secure an exciting exhibition by a well-known local artist that displayed through December.



In February, the Museum hosted an open house celebrating 25 years of the Patrons of the Pratt Society (POPs). The event took place in the Main Gallery, which featured a special exhibition, ***Community Quilts of the Pratt Museum***. Pictured L-R: Board President Linda Rowell, POPs members Eleanor Klingel, Michael Hawfield, Milli Martin, Bob Neubauer, Nancy York, and Pratt Museum Member Rika Mouw.



Patterns in Place, a 30-year retrospective exhibition of local artist Deland Anderson, was on display from October through December.



Boreal Colloquy, an artist book by Susan Campbell, was part of the special exhibit, ***In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories***, on display during the summer at the Pratt.

Education



Families at the Pratt's first Free Family Friday telling their tales. Stories were later featured in the Our Stories, Our Place exhibit.

We're proud to carry on a few of the long practiced learning-experiences established at the Pratt. Our team has revived **museum group tours, school visits, and place-based work-shopping** to extend the beauty and breath of our collective connection to the Kachemak Bay area to museum visitors. We've also laid plans for new fun, intuitive, and welcoming ways to engage in the history of this region and possibilities for it's future.

Our Stories, Our Place: A participatory exhibition and family-focused educational program running Jan 5 - Feb 5, 2024. To celebrate Pratt's rich past we've invited our community to share their stories of this place and help pave that path for its growth. The community led, ever evolving exhibit, aims to provide a moment of vibrant connection during our dark winter months while furthering our internal understanding of the Pratt's current communal landscape. The exhibit has already helped guide ongoing outreach planning, affiliated exhibits, and educational programs. **STORYTIME, a weekly workshop paired with the exhibit, is structured for families with young children.** Workshop results (new stories) are added to the exhibit along with ongoing

contributions from the broader community. Outreach for stories has brought direct connection with key stakeholders, highlighted specific needs to further diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our educational spaces, and provided new relationship-building engagement and inter-institutional collaboration.

Marine Gallery Refresh & Curriculum We are seeking funding for a permanent screen-based installation in the Pratt's empty Aquarium Tanks. This revitalization will offer novel water-related educational content and interactive storytelling. Our initial launch will highlight urgent shifts in our local ecology and empower visitors to help with communal action. Future programs will include **Student Storytellers: a curriculum developed for/with regional High School and College level students.** These community authored works will help engage younger visitors during a **new program: Free Family Fridays**, the first of which took place on December 29, 2023, bringing in a record number of recent First Friday attendees.



Marine Gallery Refresh prototype and content testing.

Participatory Community Gallery & Feedback Platforms We're outlining plans to build a permanent platform for ongoing participatory contributions to the Pratt's exhibits. Workshop participants will have an opportunity to display outputs and reflect on program successes and challenges. Exhibit visitors will be prompted to engage in direct dialogue with the institution. This dedicated site will be a connection point and conduit for conversations that lead to institutional betterment within our educational programs and beyond.

Botanical Garden

2023 was another highly productive year for Botanical Garden programming. We offered guided tours, specialized workshops, collaborative programs, and community events. Our guided tours of the Botanical and Homestead Gardens were well attended, with some low turnout days due to the persistent rains. In total, we had 194 people participate in these tours, including locals, tourists from out of state, and travelers from abroad.

Our staff offered workshops on Spring Foraging, Cultivating Wild Plants in Home Gardens, and Orchid Propagation. Another workshop, on Ethnobotany and Poison Plants, was canceled due to a staff medical emergency. We also collaborated with local artist Mavis Muller and naturalist Kim McNett, hosting Mavis's popular workshop on basket weaving for the second year, and both spring and fall series' of workshops on Nature Journaling and Sketching with Kim.



Naturalist Kim McNett speaking during one of her workshops.

We collaborated again with the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies in hosting their Day Camp program for a day in early summer. We have been re-establishing ourselves within the local educational community in a number of ways, particularly in becoming active members of the Kachemak Bay Environmental Educators Alliance, of which the Pratt Museum was a founding member years ago.

In May we again held our Annual Plant Sale, generating income for the Museum while building relationships around gardening for community members. This continues to be a popular event, and we often hear stories from local gardeners about plants they purchased in years past, which are still a source of delight in their home gardens.



Spotted Ladies Slipper Orchid in the Botanical Garden.

2023 saw the growth of our relationship with the Smithsonian, through two different programs: we formalized our connection with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, contributing viable seed and root cuttings from our garden to their research lab. Yarrow and Shawn were invited to participate in a three day workshop at SERC in Maryland for training related to the Orchids in the Classroom program, which Yarrow attended in January 2024. We are working with KBNERR on pursuing grants to enhance learning opportunities with local schools as part of implementing this training. Yarrow was also invited to participate as the Homer liaison and community science coordinator for an ethnobotanical project organized by the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center. This project will be ongoing in 2024.

Opportunities

Building a Sustainable Future We are building a strong foundation while looking to the future by adapting to changing circumstances and innovating ways we generate income. Strategically diversifying revenue sources will help ensure the financial stability of the Pratt Museum while maximizing our impact on community members and visitors alike.

Diversification is an investment in our service to the public. We are committed to growing our educational programming, reestablishing the Museum Store, cultivating partnerships with state-wide tour operators, and expanding our facility rental offerings in 2024 and beyond.

LOGOWEAR In the past couple of years, logowear has been a main focus of retail sales for the Museum. We are working on a few alternate logo designs to offer our visitors on a wider variety of products, including pottery mugs stamped with a newly designed logo hand-crafted by local potter Ruby Haigh.



LOCALLY GROWN GIFTS, like these products from AK Beauty Peony Co-Op, were a best seller during the holidays.



Standing still is the fastest way of moving backwards in a rapidly changing world.

Lauren Bacall



WORKSHOPS Local artist Deland Anderson leads a painting workshop in the main gallery.



SHOPPERS came out in large numbers to participate in our Shop Small Saturday event in November, which was part of a community-wide event facilitated by the Homer Chamber of Commerce.

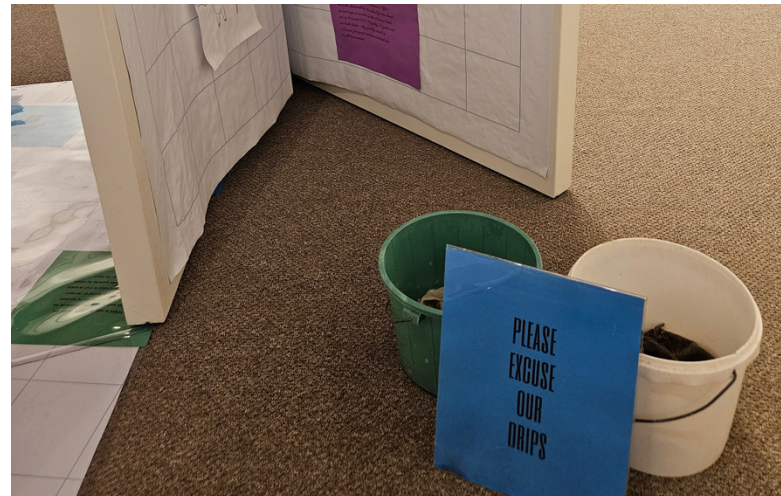
Challenges

It can be easy to say that challenges stem from inadequate financial and human resources. Although these factors impact the struggles, the challenges are rooted in long-standing issues related to infrastructure. With continued costs for repair and maintenance, operating expenses, which include repair, maintenance, and utilities have overtaken limited financial resources to properly support human resources and the program of work costs.

In 2023, Pratt Museum facilities continued to deteriorate. The roof is most noticeable with drip buckets scattered throughout the Museum galleries, harming exhibits, and winter maintenance of the roof is a health and human safety issue. Additionally, environmental controls continue to be problematic as we are not able to optimize the HVAC, which causes issues caring for fragile artifacts. As a collecting institution, Pratt Museum is limited to what we can accept. There is simply no room to accept important donations that help tell the story of our region.

While these are capital costs, finding funding impacts human resources by distracting from the Program of Work. As the Museum Team

addresses these multifaceted issues, it is imperative that we fortify our internal structures, cultivate a resilient board partnership, and foster an environment where solutions can be implemented with confidence and cohesion.



ABOVE Signage in the Main Gallery asks visitors to the museum to excuse the drips. In the background, paper elements of the exhibit show signs of water damage.



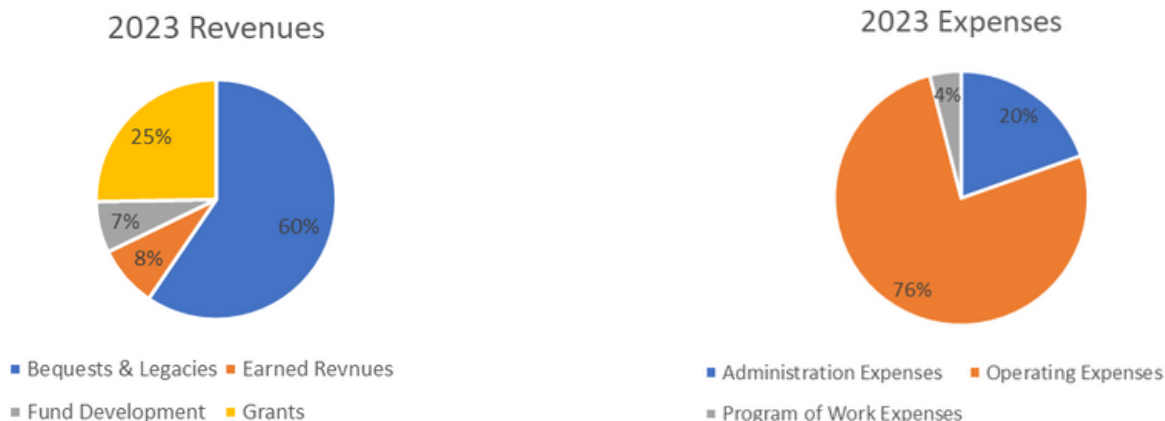
Facilities & Exhibits Manager, Chase Warren, shoveling snow off the roof to minimize ice dams which cause more leaks.

2023 Financial Report

The financial statements presented in a separate handout, date ending December 31, 2023, are a preliminary snapshot of the Pratt Museum's financial position. More accurate statements will be compiled during a financial audit conducted the week of February 12, 2024, by Foster and Company, LLC.

Given that we do not have accurate financial information for 2022 or a 2023 operating budget, a comparative Statement or a Budget v. Actual are not available. Moving forward, once the 2024 Budget is approved a Budget v. Actual will be included. A Comparative Statement will not be available until later in the summer as the data from the first half of the year needed to be cleaned up first.

The graphs below provide an overall preview of 2023 financials presented in a separate handout.



Revenue Highlights Because there was so much disruption and change in 2023, Pratt Museum revenues were precarious at best. With the generous bequest of Nancy Levinson and the recruitment of a new Executive Director, revenues were stabilized. The good news is that the Levinson gift has not been touched and is generating positive returns. The new Executive Director has been able to sustain existing grants and at the same time begin growing relationships with new and previous funders. The highlight of the year is the growth in Earned Revenues, which includes general admissions, museum program fees, membership fees, bulk fees from tour groups, and Museum Store sales. Contributed revenues, including fundraising efforts such as raffles, appeals, annual event or other activities did not have human capacity to implement. Moving forward, a fundraising calendar has been approved for 2024 with a goal to meet benchmarks.

Expense Highlights. In 2023 Pratt Museum functioned without key staff to maintain the program of work, reducing payroll expenses. The majority of expenses are operating expenses, which include facilities costs, supplies, utilities, and payroll, which consists of 81% of the operating expenses. Major repairs and maintenance are not included in the operating budget. Capital repairs are accounted for in a separate budget. Administrative costs were closely monitored for high performance. The team found ways to strategically reduce costs. The program of work, which includes all mission-related efforts, was funded by grants. Once professional staff are recruited, Pratt Museum can grow our program of work. It is worth noting that despite limited staff, the team was still successful in launching several successful offerings.

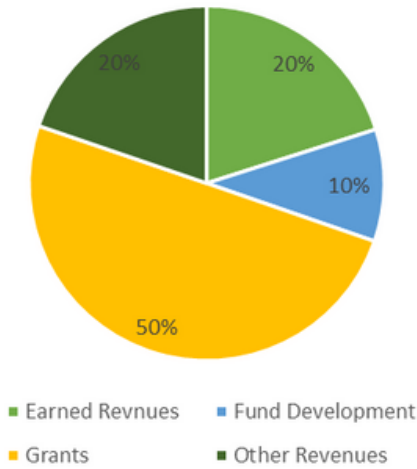
2024 Projected Budget

The 2024 Budget looks to the future with renewed optimism.

The goal of the 2024 Budget is to strategically diversify income streams while responsibly streamlining costs for sustainability and maximum mission impact. While grants remain an important part of the income stream, diversifying earned and contributed revenue creates an exciting opportunity to broaden and deepen relationships. Diversification also provides safeguards from budget shortfalls when grants prove unreliable.

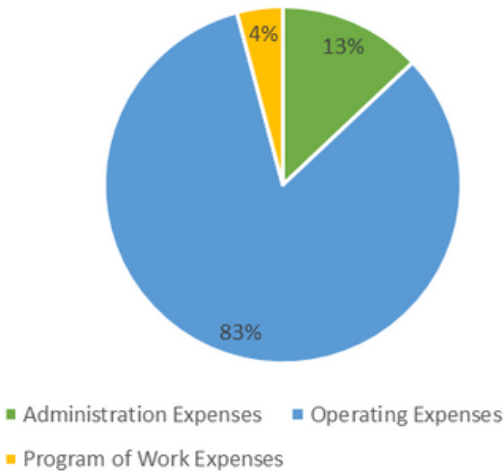


2024 Revenue Projections



Earned Revenues	\$136,500
Fund Development	\$69,500
Grants	\$339,455
Other Revenues	\$134,292

2024 Expense Projections



Administration Expenses	\$81,500
Operating Expenses	\$520,914
Program of Work Expenses	\$26,000

Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers play a vital role here at the Museum, and we are incredibly grateful for each and every person who chooses to help in this way. We rely on volunteers to serve on our governing board, to help on committees, and support our mission-driven programming.

In 2023, community members spent over **1,108 hours** in volunteer service at our museum! Those hours were spent greeting visitors, giving tours, educating visitors about our exhibits, and helping with the behind-the-scenes tasks necessary for the museum to function.

We couldn't fulfill our mission without our volunteers, and we want to say **thank you** to all those who devoted their time and energy in 2023.

Pratt Museum Volunteers

Marcia Akresh
Kay Curtis
Kim Dickinson
Mannfried Funk
Aurora Greenstreet
Kris Holderied
Sara Jackinsky
Janet Kline
Bob Neubauer
Lee Post
Erik Pullman
Linda Rowell
Marilyn Sigman
Bill Smith
Kathy Smith
Mel Strydom
Vexten Van Reed
Dave Webber



Vexten Van Reed is a participant in the *Nine Star Education & Employment Services Youth Employment Program*. We have partnered with *Nine Star* to provide on-the-job training to plan participants interested in volunteering at the Pratt. Aurora, who volunteered during the summer in the Harrington Cabin, was another participant in the program. Thank you Vexten, Aurora and *Nine Star*!



Bob Neubauer has been a volunteer at Pratt Museum for 18 years! When asked to describe his favorite thing about being a Pratt volunteer, he answered, "All of it - I just love being a part of the Pratt." Thank you, Bob!

With Gratitude: **Thank You** to Our Generous Supporters

Pratt Museum Members

Donna Aderhold, Kasey Aderhold, Marcia & Abe Akresh, Paul Allan & Louise Ashmun, Martha E. Altman, Janet Ames, Ole Andersson, Doug & Landa Baily, LaRae Bartolowits, Paul Bartolowits, Geo Beach, Barbara Beeman, Heather Beggs, Annette Bellamy, Julia Bevins, Barbara Bigelow, Melissa Blair, Cindy Bolognani, Donald Bradley, Hannah Bradley, Savanna Bradley, Pam Brodie, Ralph Broshes, Martin Brown, Elaine Burgess, Marylou Burton, Gail Busche, Hilda Caraballo, Teresa Carns, Kathryn Carssow, Ted Carter, Dotty Cline, Denise Clyne, Dan & Jenny Coyle, Allan Crawford, Maria D'Agostino, Jeff Dean, Aubrie DeLyser, Caleb Eckert, Gayle Eckert, Linda Ellsworth, Lizeth Escobedo, Krys Evensen, Clark Fair, Sue Fallon, Rosemarie Fiala, Janet Fink, Stephen Fogarsi, Asia Freeman, Mary Frische, Mannfried Funk, Cynthia Gaguine, Laura Ground, Richard & Nell Gustafson, Elizabeth Hagerman, Donna Hall, Steve & Whitney Harness, Dotti Harness-Foster & Rick Foster, Tim Hatfield, Roberta Highland, Kristine Holderied, Ed Hutchinson & Jan Knudson, Susan Jackson, Lauren Jerew, Suzanne Jerew, Tim Jerew, Margaret Johnson, Carolyn Jolley, Janette Keiser, Maureen Kennedy, Melvin Kim, Jackie Knutson, Art Koeninger, Judith Kramer, Marcia Kuszmaul, Sarah Lambe, Allyson Larned, Wendy Lefton, Barbara & Martin Leichtung, Anna Lewald, Nancy Lord, Shana Loshbaugh, Megan Malcolm, Carl Markon, Milli Martin, Neil McArthur, Cathy McCarthy, Roberta McKinney, Joe & Joan Mello, Sen. Micciche, John Miles, Rebecca Moorman, John & Rika Mouw, Liz Mueller, Robert H. Neubauer & Nancy J. York, Beverley Nikora, Malia J. Oliver, Jenny Olson, Mike O'Meara, Paula Riley, Deborah Poore, Alice Porter, Anna Raupp, Jane Regan, Patricia Relay, Jill Rife, Sarah Robertson, Erin Rosenberg, Jenny Roth, Linda Rowell, Priscilla Russell, Vicki Russel, Eleanor Sarren, Paul & Tina Seaton, Chessie & Jon Sharp, Carol & Wes Skinner, Anna Smith, Larry Smith, South Peninsula Hospital Long-Term Care, Mel Strydom, Laurie Stuart, Karen Svenson, William Tener, David Trudgen, Barbara Veeck, Kyra & Neil Wagner, Carolyn Westbrook, Patricia Westbrook, Lisa & Tim Whip, Dana Whittaker, Dan & Judy Winn, Patricia Wise.

Individual Donors

Terry Anderson, Heather Beggs, Ed Berg, Melissa Blair, Samuel Cason, Mary Chouinard, Alexander & Inge Clark, Marylynn & Roger Clyne, David Collett-Paule, Peter Crimp & Paula Crimp-Cullenberg, Carey Curtis, Leah Evans & Brad Thornburgh, Brad Feld & Amy Batchelor, Mannfried Funk, Caliana & Elliana Green, Bernard Griffard, Richard Gustafson, Michael Haines, Sherrie Hartley, Jeffrey & Dana Jaworski, Jack Kvasnikoff, Ken G. Landfield, Carol Larson, Richard Leirer, Bonnie Lind, Marie Lundstrom, Milli Martin, Jo Michalski, Joseph Miles, John Mishko, Catherine Mitchell, Eileen Mullen, Bill Noomah, Jeanne Parker, Elissa Pettibone, Lee Post, Sarah Pyhala, David & Marga Raskin, Seneca Roach, Linda Rowell, Bowen & Brooke Schreir, Marilyn Sigman, David & Lynn Slade, Mel Strydom, Carol Swartz, Jeffery Walters, Miranda Weiss

Foundation and Institutional Supporters

Alaska Community Foundation
Alaska State Council on the Arts National Endowment for the Arts
Economic Development Administration
American Rescue Plan Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Program
Ferguson Foundation
Homer Foundation
Institute of Museum and Library Services Inspire! Program
Richard L. and Diane M. Block Foundation
Rasmuson Foundation

Community Partners and In-Kind Donations:

Alaska Municipal League
Alaska World Arts Festival
City of Homer
Defender's of the Wild
Friends of State Library
Homer Middle School
Homer Real Estate
Juneberry Lodge
Paula's B&B
Patrons of the Pratt Society
Pier One Theater
Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council
Jeffrey H. Dean
North to Alaska
Wells Fargo

Overheard from our Visitors

Worth a Visit!

Good museum with diverse exhibits presented well (easy to read, etc). Very nice paintings by locals. We saw it all in about an hour.

Great

Interesting place. Checked the cabin out, walked some trails, all-in-all a nice place to stop at; would do again!

Inspiring & Uplifting

So much in a small space! Loved the mix of art with information. SO inspiring and uplifting!

A Real Treasure

I was blown away by this well-curated little museum and how exciting place-based environmental arts-humanities-science programs are. Thank you!



Lucky Drive By

The displays are very informative, and I was suprised to see the actual size of a sea otter!

Fabulous

I had never realized what a hard life the settlers and fisherman eeked out and enjoyed seeing the objects/tools they used.

Stunning & Historical

The cost of cleaning up after the oil spill blew me away. Very clever exhibit to show how big the spill was compared to other states.

