

# Annual Report

GCM Fiscal Year  
Oct 2024 to Sept 2025



let's  
play.

Glazer  
Children's  
Museum

# Playing It Back: A Year in Review

It is my joy to share this year's Annual Report, celebrating a landmark year for Glazer Children's Museum. In 2025, we marked **15 years** in our downtown location, welcomed our **3 millionth visitor**, and were named a **Top 10** Children's Museum by USA Today, all remarkable milestones in our 40-year legacy of serving Tampa Bay!

## Goal 1: Ignite a Shared Passion for Play

This year, we brought our mission to life on a grand scale. The 15th Annual Birthday Bash transformed Curtis Hixon Park into a free, citywide playground, complete with local artisans, kid performers, touch-a-truck, bouncy houses, animal meet-and-greets, and more. We also expanded our efforts to inspire a passion for play at the **legislative level**, hosting school board members and state representatives who witnessed firsthand the creativity, curiosity, and collaboration that define child-led play at GCM. Our goal remains clear: to ignite a shared passion for the power of play in every child, family, and community we touch.

## Goal 2: Provide Powerful Play Experiences

Our exhibits and programs this year sparked wonder and imagination across every corner of the Museum. In March, we opened the **expanded Forts exhibit**, a four-times-larger playground of creativity and construction. In May, **Let's See!**, presented by the Glazer Vision Foundation, invited children to explore vision, light, and color through playful, hands-on experiences. We also enhanced **MakeSpace** with fresh furniture and a new look for budding artists, and unveiled a giant **ADA-accessible train table** with a playful twist: children can crawl underneath and pop up through special holes to reach the heart of the table. These experiences, along with our daily programs and events, ensure every visit is inspiring, inclusive, and unforgettable.

## Goal 3: Identify & Remove Barriers

For the second year in a row, GCM granted over **\$1 million in free and discounted admission**, helping tens of thousands of children and families access the power of play. Our new **Play for Everyone** initiative provides flexible, free, or low-cost access year-round through Access Passes, Partner Passes, and Public Library Passes. Additionally, our Certified Autism Center™ designation reflects our commitment to welcoming and supporting **neurodiverse children and families**, with trained staff, sensory-friendly spaces, and neurodiversity-affirming programs. Every child deserves the chance to play, learn, and thrive, and we are making that a reality.

## Goal 4: Operate with Fiscal & Social Responsibility

In 2025, GCM continued to **turn every dollar into discovery**, using careful stewardship to create meaningful play experiences for children and families. A highlight of the year was the **\$2.5 million Lilly Endowment grant** for our Play Builds Character initiative, which will expand programs, research, and tools to help children develop strong character traits through play. Through smart management and strategic investment, every contribution fuels exhibits, programs, and experiences that shape the next generation of curious, creative, and confident learners.

Here's to another year of **curiosity, creativity, and connection!**

**Sarah Cole**  
President & CEO



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## Mission

GCM's mission is to create and foster engaging, impactful PLAY experiences for children and families to learn and thrive.

## Vision

Our vision is a community that values PLAY as the foundation for the Learning and development of children and families across generations.

## Values

Play | Experimentation | Equity & Inclusion | Collaboration | Sustainability

### Goal 1

Ignite a shared passion for the power of play by engaging children, families, and the entire community.  
**Pages 4-5**

### Goal 2

Provide powerful, playful experiences that excite and engage children, their families, and the entire community.  
**Pages 6-7**

### Goal 3

Identify and remove barriers so every child and family in our community has access to powerful play and feels welcome.  
**Pages 8-9**

### Goal 4

Operate a fiscally sustainable and socially responsible organization to keep GCM growing, evolving, and innovating to meet the needs of our community.  
**Pages 10-11**



“

It's important to us that every child has access to places like Glazer Children's Museum so that they grow up with a curiosity about the world around them.

”

- ANGELA AND CHRIS LAFACE

*A Birthday Bash attendee, and big fan of dragons, plays at the museum's new ADA-accessible train table*

## Pioneers of Play

### GOAL 1: IGNITE A SHARED PASSION FOR PLAY

For 40 years, this organization has inspired children and families across Tampa Bay to play with purpose, and for the last 15 years, our downtown museum has served as the vibrant heart of that mission. From the park to the Capitol, Glazer Children's Museum continues to lead the movement to make play a shared value in Tampa Bay and beyond.

### 15th Birthday Bash

This year, we celebrated our milestone 15th anniversary with **Birthday Bash**, a free community celebration in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park that drew families from across the region for a day of joy, laughter, and discovery. From local artisans and kid performers to bouncy houses, touch-a-truck, and animal meet-and-greets, the event was a powerful reminder that play is a universal language that connects us all.

### 3 Millionth Visitor

That same spirit of connection was on full display in January when we welcomed our **3 millionth visitor** through the museum's doors. The lucky family, a mother and her young son, were surprised by Team GCM with balloons and a parade through the museum, marking a joyful milestone that symbolizes the countless moments of play and learning we've shared with our community since opening our doors downtown.

### Play Advocacy

Our passion for play doesn't stop at our walls. This year, GCM expanded its efforts to ignite a shared passion for play at the **legislative level**, hosting a series of visits with elected officials, from school board members to state representatives, who experienced firsthand the power of play in action. During their tours, leaders including House Minority Leader Fentrice Driskell and Representative Susan Valdés witnessed how child-led play fosters curiosity and creativity. By engaging policymakers in the museum experience, we're helping to shape a future where play is recognized not just as recreation, but as an essential component of education, growth, and community well-being.



*HWB Marching Band strikes up a celebration at Birthday Bash*



*A midday parade welcomes our 3 millionth visitor family*



*Representative Susan Valdés visits GCM*



GLAZER VISION FOUNDATION

“ The *Let's See!* exhibit highlights the importance of taking children for annual eye screenings in a colorful and artful way. ”

- THE GLAZER FAMILY

*The Glazer Vision Foundation and CEO Sarah Cole cut the ribbon at the Let's See! opening ceremony*

## Taking Play to New Heights

### GOAL 2: PROVIDE POWERFUL PLAY EXPERIENCES

In 2025, the Glazer Children's Museum expanded its immersive experiences with bold new exhibits that inspired imagination, inclusivity, and discovery. From building cozy forts to exploring the wonders of the human eye, children and families found new ways to play, connect, and learn together.

### Forts

Opening in March, an **expanded Forts exhibit** invited children to unleash their creativity in an open-ended environment designed for collaborative play. This beloved, expansive exhibit encourages kids to build, experiment, and take risks, whether constructing secret hideouts or sky-high towers. Designed with sensory-friendly elements and bilingual signage, Forts ensures every child can participate fully in the joy of building something from the ground up or snuggling up with a book.



*Sarah cuts the ribbon at the Forts opening ceremony*

### Let's See!

In May, the Museum debuted **Let's See!**, a vibrant new exhibit exploring the science of sight and the magic of perception. As part of a long-standing partnership with the **Glazer Vision Foundation**, Let's See! continues our shared mission to ensure that every child has the opportunity to see and experience the world clearly.



*Families explore the colorful world of vision in Let's See*

### Enhancements

In addition to new exhibits, we invested in significant upgrades to existing play spaces. **MakeSpace**, our beloved creative studio, received an updated look with all new furniture and flooring, making it even more inspiring for young artists and creators. The Museum also replaced its small train table with a giant, **ADA-accessible train table** that kids can crawl under and pop up through to reach the tracks inside, perfect for exploring, collaborating, and getting hands-on with the action from every angle. These enhancements, along with refreshed signage, new interactives, and improved accessibility, ensure that every visit offers new ways to explore, create, and engage.



*Field trip students create masterpieces in MakeSpace*

## Play is for Everyone

### GOAL 3: IDENTIFY & REMOVE BARRIERS

For the second year in a row, the Glazer Children's Museum provided over \$1 million in free and discounted admission, demonstrating our steadfast commitment to ensuring that every child and family in Tampa Bay can experience the joy of play.



A kiddo climbs a mountain of pillows in the Forts exhibit



A GCM guest tickles the ivories of a vintage piano in Forts

### 1 in 4 Guests Visit for Reduced Admission

In 2025, we launched **Play for Everyone**, a groundbreaking initiative that replaces the Museum's Free Tuesday program and allows families to visit on days and times that work best for them. Through Play for Everyone, families can access the Museum via three programs:

**Access Pass:** Families receiving SNAP, EBT, or WIC benefits can visit the Museum for \$5 per person, up to four guests, with the pass valid for a full year.

**Partner Pass:** Community organizations distribute free admission tickets directly to the families they serve, expanding reach to those who need it most.

**Public Library Pass:** Families can check out a four-person pass through local libraries, making Museum visits as easy as borrowing a book.

By providing flexible, targeted access, Play for Everyone removes barriers of cost and scheduling, ensuring families can visit when it works best for them. This initiative builds on the Museum's longstanding partnerships with community organizations and foundations, opening doors for tens of thousands of children and families each year.

### Certified Autism Center™

In January 2025, the Museum achieved **Certified Autism Center™** designation from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. This recognition reflects facility enhancements and at least 80% of guest-facing staff having completed autism-specific training, equipping the Museum with best practices and resources to welcome and support neurodiverse and sensory-sensitive guests.

This certification complements the Museum's ongoing accessibility initiatives, including Neurodiversity-Affirming Camp Imagination, Sunshine Sunday sensory-friendly events, and thoughtful sensory accommodations throughout the Museum. Together, these efforts create an inclusive, welcoming environment where every child can play, learn, and thrive.



We are committed to making Tampa Bay the best place to live in the country.

“GCM plays a vital role in this mission by providing children with access to valuable resources, enriching experiences, and a strong sense of community.”

- COLEY AND MATT SIMMONS

*A tiny guest meets the larger-than-life Llama Llama during a Summer of Play Character Appearance*

# Playing the Long Game

## GOAL 4: OPERATE WITH FISCAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In 2025, Glazer Children's Museum continued to turn every dollar into discovery, using careful stewardship to create unforgettable play experiences for children and families. From innovative exhibits to inclusive programs, every investment sparks curiosity, creativity, and connection across Tampa Bay. A crowning achievement this year was the **\$2.5 million grant from the Lilly Endowment** for our Play Builds Character initiative, fueling programs, research, and tools that foster character development through the power of play.



House Minority Leader Fentrice Driskell meets Big John



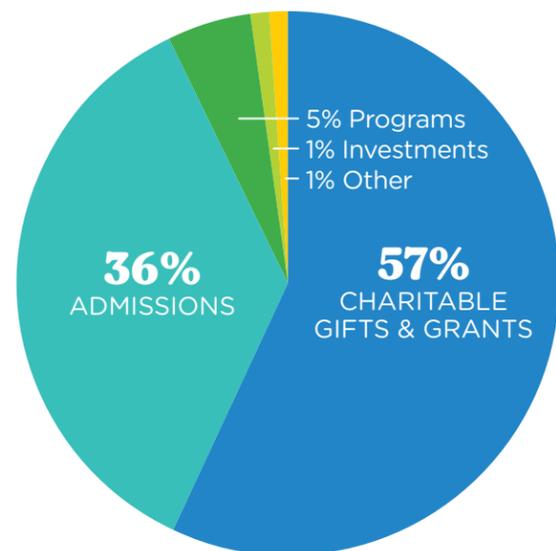
Tampa Bay Water hydrates Birthday Bash party goers

## Financial Stewardship and Community Impact

### Revenue:

Charitable Gifts & Grants	57%	●	\$3,878,813
Admissions	36%	●	\$2,441,563
Programs	5%	●	\$310,869
Investment Income	1%	●	\$81,488
Other Revenue	1%	●	\$78,594

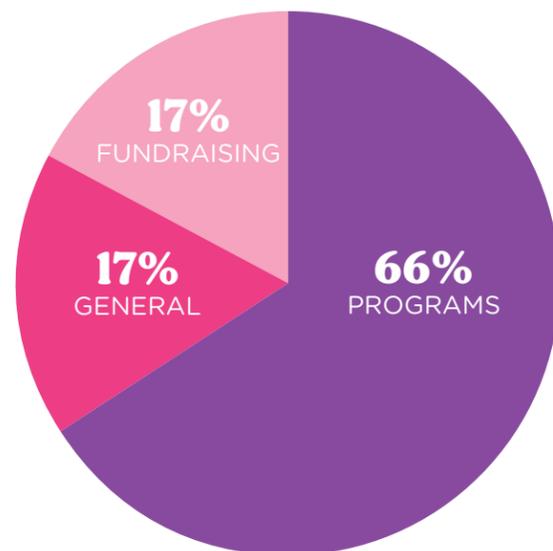
**Total** \$6,791,327



### Expenses:

Programs	66%	●	\$3,288,511
General	17%	●	\$841,777
Fundraising	17%	●	\$836,725

**Total** \$4,967,013



We want to do our part in making Tampa Bay the best place to raise a family in America. Big John and the interactive exhibit make textbooks come to life for children.

- THE PAGIDIPATI FAMILY



**222,120**

Guests visited GCM in Fiscal Year 2025



**960**

Campers attended GCM's Camp Imagination



**21%**

Guests were Annual Members



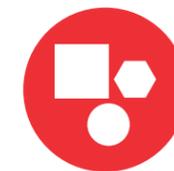
**55**

Campers identified as neurodivergent during Neuro-Affirming Camp



**28%**

Guests visited through Financial Access Programs



**9,094**

Children and families served through Learn & Play



**99,695**

Guests participated in our Daily Programs



**1,553**

Volunteer Hours from partners, interns and Teen Play Leaders



**23,418**

Students and Chaperones visited GCM on a Field Trip



**3,000,000**

Guests have walked through GCM doors since opening in 2010



“

Watching GCM uplift kids via museum play, events, and educational programming is a privilege. Our support will continue because GCM loves creating confident smiles just as much as we do!

”

**- IMAGINATION ORTHODONTICS**

*Mission supporters explore a vibrant ribbon installation at Imagination Gala, GCM's largest single fundraising event*

## Partners in Play

### THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 DONORS

As a 501c3 non-profit organization, GCM is community-funded by our generous donors. Together we break down barriers to ensure all children have access to brain-building play.

#### Play

Children's Board of Hillsborough County  
Glazer Vision Foundation  
Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioner  
Lilly Endowment Inc  
RIPA & Associates and the LaFace Family

#### Discovery

Anonymous  
Ball Foundation  
BayCare Health System, Inc.  
Bryan & Shanna Glazer  
City of Tampa  
Deirdre & Joseph Colucci  
Imagine Orthodontic Group, LLC  
Matthew & Coley Simmons  
PNC Bank  
Publix Supermarket Charities  
Raymond James Financial  
Suncoast Credit Union  
Tampa Bay Buccaneers Foundation  
TECO Energy  
University of Tampa  
Vinik Family Foundation  
Visit Tampa Bay  
Watermelon Swim

#### Connection

Adams and Reese LLP  
American Momentum Bank  
Association of Children's Museums  
Cheryl & Harvey Schonbrun  
Clinton Deibert  
Comerica Bank  
Dairy Joy  
Debbie Crockett  
Ellison Companies  
Fanatics Foundation

Fifth Third Bank  
Florida ENT & Allergy  
Good Greek  
Grayson & Cathy Kamm  
Helios Education Foundation  
Hill Ward Henderson  
Kelli & Bobby Pierce  
Legends Hospitality LLC  
LMCU  
Merritt & Patrick Mosley  
Nancy & Robert Cole  
New York Yankees  
Tampa Foundation  
Port of Tampa  
Renaissance Hotel  
Shumaker  
Spero Georgedakis  
Tampa Bay Water  
Tampa General Hospital  
TD Charitable Foundation  
The Elan Group  
The Shilen & Parita Patel Family Foundation  
Toni Everett  
Tony Clayton  
TVS Florida, Inc. Architecture  
Xerox

#### Adventure

Aakash Patel  
Anitra Pavka & Joey DeVilla  
Bailey Family Foundation  
Brandan Lingle  
Brian Anderson Jr  
Brian Ford  
Brooke Layton  
Courtney Marks  
David Duvoisin  
David Osterweil  
Earl Horton  
Four Green Fields CHP LLC

Ginny & Michael Garcia  
Greg Will  
Isabel & John Dewey  
James & Sandy Murman  
Joe McClung  
John & Laura Byrne  
Joshua Layton  
Junior League of Tampa  
Kara & Justin Pudenz  
Libby & Joseph Lifsey  
Madai Favaro  
Marsh McLennan Agency  
Meena Shah-Caygoz  
Michael Robbins  
Riley Mellor  
Sara Knowles  
Suzy & Mark Mendelson  
Trenam Law

#### Enjoy

Catherine Buckhorn  
Chris & Emily Gstalder  
Chris & Emily Johnson  
Christopher & Jasmine Denton  
Dor Ghivoni  
Eric Savage  
John & Karin Hotchkiss  
Kourtney Sanchez  
Marcy & Brian Kornfeld  
Maria Mollise  
Max Coberly  
Michael Owen  
Pamela Page  
Peter Lopez  
Richard Hanus  
Sandra Kramer  
Tiffany Hernandez  
Trevor Lamphier  
Wade & Bonnie Kornblith

# Peers in Play

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This distinguished group of community leaders volunteer their time, professional counsel, and monetary support to help further GCM's mission within the community.



Board Member, Sandy Murman, and GCM Staff help raise funds at GCM's annual Imagination Gala

### Board of Directors

- Board Chair**  
Suzy Mendelson
- Vice Board Chair**  
Grayson Kamm
- Treasurer Chair**  
Brad Abbey
- Secretary Chair**  
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- John Astrab  
Nadia Combs  
Isabel Dewey  
Cat DiPaolo
- Lineaa Floden  
Alison Fraga  
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Melissa Golombak  
Patrick Mosley  
Sandy Murman  
Sara Murphy  
Parita Patel  
Anitra Pavka  
Kelli Pierce  
Eric Savage  
Jeff Skowronek

### Executive Team

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- Suzanne Delaney, CFRE**  
Chief Development Officer
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Chief Financial Officer
- Pam Hillestad**  
Chief Play & Learning Officer
- Kristen Nieves**  
Chief Operating Officer
- Kate White**  
Chief Marketing Officer



GCM Staff and Board celebrate 15 years at Birthday Bash



Team GCM accepts a TDP Award for Learn & Play Tampa Bay



“

The gateway that GCM represents is really meaningful to us. Building community by making sure that all kids have access to this is creating a legacy that we can all be proud of.

”

- PARITA AND SHILEN PATEL

Team GCM member Nina and her family pose in Forts for the April cover of Tampa Bay Parenting magazine

Glazer Children's Museum  
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Tampa, FL 33602

**Follow** @glazerchildrensmuseum

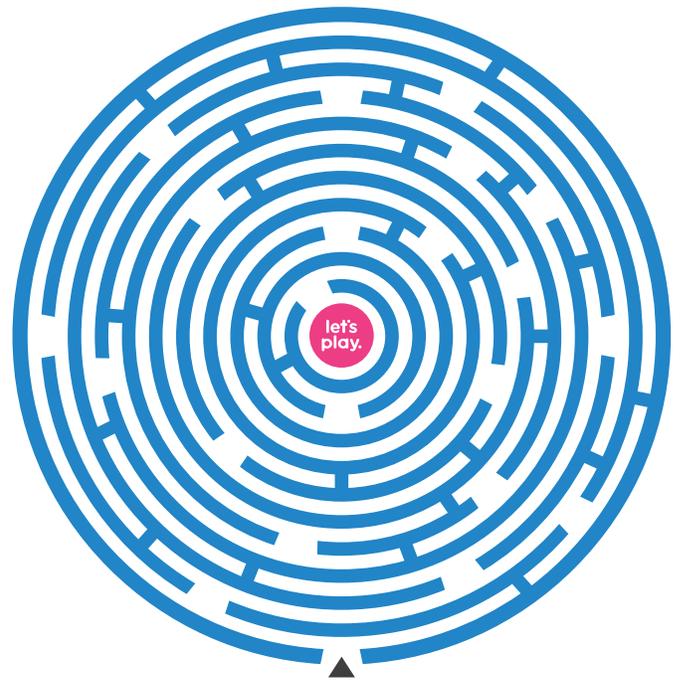
**Visit** GlazerMuseum.org/waystogive

**Email** giving@glazermuseum.org

## A Moment of Play

Thank you for going on this journey with us. Grownups need play too, so give yourself a fun little brain break!

C O M M U N I T Y U A P Z  
L I H D N T M A E B O I M  
D V C I F B A F I G R J E  
X O U S L N G M T Y Y O F  
P C R C A U I M P A C T A  
C R I O E R N K S A P K M  
Q S O V G X A R R E B S I  
M U S E U M T P L A Y A L  
W B I R T B I G J O H N Y  
F U T Y D E O X A B F M R  
S W Y O E S N K U P Z G P  
A P X B Y D P I Y E U Q V  
H M I S S I O N L X D E W



### WORD BANK:

Big John | Community | Curiosity | Discovery | Family  
Imagination | Impact | Mission | Museum | Play | Tampa Bay