

Sciencenter raises money to renew and reach out

Simon Wheeler, swheeler@ithacajournal.com | @IJPhotos 5:27 p.m. EDT June 11, 2015



(Photo: SIMON WHEELER / Staff Photo)

The [Sciencenter \(http://www.sciencenter.org/\)](http://www.sciencenter.org/) is raising money to update almost all of the Ithaca institution's exhibits and programs.

A fundraising campaign went public Thursday morning at an announcement at its First Street location. The campaign's goal is \$3.8 million by 2016, and already, \$2.6 million has been donated. An anonymous gift of \$500,000 is the largest amount given to the campaign so far.

The drive started in December 2013 and has gone so well that the goal was increased from its original \$2.6 million to \$3.8 million, said Executive Director Charles Trautmann.

Donations will be used to create new and upgraded exhibits and displays at the Sciencenter.

Monika Collins, of Danby, director of development and community relations for the Sciencenter, said about 80 individuals and foundations, companies and government organizations have contributed to the initial phase of the campaign.

To be at 75 percent of the goal at this point feels good, Trautmann said.

"It's been amazing because the community has really just stepped up for this campaign and really given above and beyond our expectations," Collins said.

A big component of the capital campaign is allowing the Sciencenter to reach children who can't visit it. Starting in January, the \$500,000 anonymous gift, plus a federal grant of \$150,000, have supported a program for Head Start teacher outreach and professional development courses, and workshops for parents to increase science education.

Head Start takes the Sciencenter to the community, to people who might not be able to visit the Sciencenter.

"It's making our reach far and wide, and making sure that we reach all of the families in Tompkins County and the surrounding areas," Collins said.

About 20 percent of the work updating exhibits and programs at the Sciencenter is underway. This includes the creation of a new touch tank exhibit that models a tidal pool on the Maine coastline, a new mini golf course and new bathrooms.

The work made possible by the "Curious Confident Inspired" campaign will take place over five years at the center.

"Every time you come into the Sciencenter — hopefully you come in a couple of times a year — you're going to see something new," Trautmann said.

Cargill Deicing Technology, of Lansing, has donated \$200,000 to the campaign.

Cargill mine manager Shawn Wilczynski, who is on the Sciencenter's board, said the company sets aside a portion of earnings each year for community involvement in education, nutrition and environment.

"I see that as an investment in the current and future aspect for our business," Wilczynski said.

Since 1983, the Sciencenter has grown from a storefront science discovery center on the Commons in Ithaca to the First Street building that has been expanded and improved several times. It sees 100,000 visitors annually and reaches 1 million people a year through traveling exhibits, Collins said.

"Our goal is to continually keep advancing the Sciencenter in some way, and so this is just the latest plan for five years to upgrade, renovate, spruce up, renew, re-imagine, as we call it, the Sciencenter," Trautmann said.

Follow Simon Wheeler on Twitter @ijphotos.

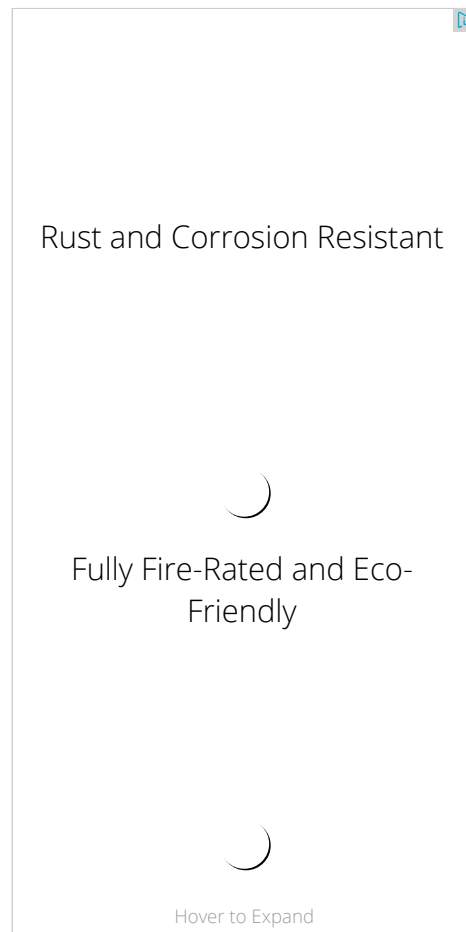
To donate

•Online at [sciencenter.org/donate.html](http://www.sciencenter.org/donate.html) (<http://www.sciencenter.org/donate.html>).

•Mail a personal check, made out to the Sciencenter, to Sciencenter, Office of Advancement, 601 First St., Ithaca, NY 14850.

•To make a payment by phone, call Christine Bissen, director of advancement, at (607) 272-0600, ext. 19.

Read or Share this story: <http://ithacajr.nl/1JluSOk>



TOP VIDEOS



[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/42917068240\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/42917068240)

'Black' NAACP leader outed as white woman by parents

[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/42917068240\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/42917068240)

02:12



[Watch: 4 men on sinking boat rescued by Coast Guard](#)

[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/4291596150001\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/4291596150001)

[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/4291596150001\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/4291596150001)

01:58



[Prosecutor: Doctors felt Germanwings co-pilot unfit to fly](#)

[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/4291157594001\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/4291157594001)

[\(/videos/news/3636199505001/4291157594001\)](/videos/news/3636199505001/4291157594001)

MORE STORIES



Prisoner search has yet to affect Adirondack tourism

[\(/story/news/2015/06/10/prisoner-search-yet-](/story/news/2015/06/10/prisoner-search-yet-affect-adirondack-tourism/71022808/)

[search-yet-](#)

[affect-](#)

[adirondack-](#)

[tourism/71022808/\)](#)

[\(/story/news/2015/06/10/prisoner-search-yet-](/story/news/2015/06/10/prisoner-search-yet-affect-adirondack-tourism/71022808/)

[affect-adirondack-tourism/71022808/\)](#)

June 11, 2015, 9:56 p.m.



Police say prison worker backed out of helping in escape

[\(/story/news/local/new-](/story/news/local/new-york/2015/06/11/cabbie-reports-driving-escaped-convicts/71056020/)

[york/2015/06/11/cabbie-](#)

[reports-driving-escaped-](#)

[convicts/71056020/\)](#)

June 11, 2015, 8:53 p.m.

[\(/story/news/local/new-](/story/news/local/new-york/2015/06/11/cabbie-reports-driving-escaped-convicts/71056020/)

[york/2015/06/11/cabbie-](#)

[reports-driving-escaped-](#)

[convicts/71056020/\)](#)

[reports-driving-escaped-](#)

[convicts/71056020/\)](#)

Child dies of untreated ear infection; parents charged



[\(/story/news/public-safety/2015/06/11/bradford-county-pair-charged-childs-death/71053600/\)](https://www.wyrt.com/story/news/public-safety/2015/06/11/bradford-county-pair-charged-childs-death/71053600/)

June 11, 2015, 7:02 p.m.

[safety/2015/06/11/bradford-](https://www.wyrt.com/story/news/public-safety/2015/06/11/bradford-county-pair-charged-childs-death/71053600/)

[county-pair-charged-childs-death/71053600/\)](https://www.wyrt.com/story/news/public-safety/2015/06/11/bradford-county-pair-charged-childs-death/71053600/)

CHAMPION vs CHAMPION
THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE

UFC 188
PRESENTED BY **BLVD LIGHT**

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
VELASQUEZ vs WERDUM
SAT. JUNE 13
LIVE ON PAY-PER-VIEW
AND IN SELECT MOVIE THEATRES

#UFC188
GO DEEPER ▶