

# MISSOULA BUTTERFLY HOUSE & INSECTARIUM

## 2023 Annual Report

### 2023 From Dream to Grand Opening

By Jen Marangelo, Executive Director



**“Pinch me! Am I dreaming?” I found myself thinking that a number of times toward the end of last year, and for several reasons.**

Partly because 2023 wrapped up with the realization of a dream I've personally been working toward for 20 years ... partly because of the incredible response our new facility received from our community ...and partly because of the many long days and sleepless nights it took to get to opening day. But yes indeed, I was wide awake and experiencing something extraordinary.

In partnership with the Missoula County Department of Ecology & Extension and the Missoula Conservation District, on December 5, 2023 Jerry Marks and I cut the ribbon to the Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center – the new home for the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium as well as our partners' programs. On December 6th at 10:00AM we opened for "business as usual" for the first time, beginning a new journey that had us hitting the ground running. In the three and a half weeks remaining until the New Year, we welcomed 8,958 visitors through our doors.



Seeing and hearing the expressions of joy and delight on visitors faces as they walked into the butterfly house for the first time. The excited conversations about the unique destination we've created for Missoula with long-time supporters as well as new members. Let's just say I got choked up, at least once, on a daily basis those first few weeks.

If I were to begin to list everyone I'd like to thank for the role they played in this success, we'd need to double the pages of this Annual Report. Our significantly expanded staff, our Board of Directors, and our capital campaign Steering Committee members. Our partners at Missoula County. The different consultants we worked with in a variety of ways, ranging from our capital campaign to building exhibit furniture. And the swarm of donors who helped make this long-term dream become a reality. Saying "Thank you" just scratches the surface.

For the most part, the saying is true, "It takes a village." But more specifically, in this case, "It took Missoula." Thank you for making this dream a reality! I look forward to seeing you in the butterfly house soon. 🦋

# Hitting the Jackpot - Staff & Volunteers!



Wow! How we've grown. Starting 2023 with 7 staff (roughly the number of staff we've had for the past several years), as we moved closer and closer to the opening of our new facility we were in for a big change.

With a tropical butterfly house filled with beautiful butterflies, an exhibit area showcasing a wide array of arthropod species, a gift shop, and the expectation of thousands of visitors, we had a lot of new bases to cover in order to provide the kind of experience we've envisioned and to keep things running smoothly. By the end of the year, we had doubled our staff to 14 positions. You can see a complete staff listing on the back page of this report. We're no longer a "small" organization!

And as the title of this article hints, we hit the jackpot in terms of bringing on some incredibly talented individuals. We had many new arthropod species on exhibit and a butterfly house filled tropical plants to care for. We had a new admissions system to learn. We had a gift shop to stock, organize and manage. We had school classes excited to be some of the first to come for a field trip in our new space. And fingers crossed, we'd have a lot of visitors to introduce to the amazing world of insects. On all fronts, our staff stepped up to each and every challenge to make our opening a resounding success.

While 14 staff might sound like a lot, there was no way we could cover all the bases without the help of volunteers. From the time our doors opened to the end of the year, our list of volunteers had grown to 52. Collectively, these invaluable volunteers put in 545 hours in our first three weeks of operation.

2023 was an extraordinary year of change and we could not be more thrilled with the team we've been able to assemble to help run the show! 🐛



## 2023 Education Program Stats



**Online Bug Encounters:** 49 encounters reaching 63,679 Facebook and Instagram viewers. Check them out every Wednesday at 1:00 on Facebook or in the archives at [missoulabutterflyhouse.org/online-bug-encounters/](https://missoulabutterflyhouse.org/online-bug-encounters/).



**Summer Camps:** 5 camps for 86 campers with our partners at the Montana Natural History Center, spectrUM, Missoula Community School, and the YMCA.



**What's Buzzin' Reports:** 28 reports with 301 insect photos featured. With the 2024 season already underway, send us photos of what you are seeing.



**Bugs Around Town/Pop-up Exhibits:** 21 programs reaching 873 individuals. A big thank you to our partners at spectrUM and EmPower Place.



**Notes From the Lab:** 23 Reports covering a wide array of buggy topics.



**Bugs & Brews:** Despite the busy year, we held 4 lectures welcoming 247 attendees. Thank you, Draught Works!



**Community Science:** 2023 represented the fourth field season of our participation in two nation-wide research projects; *US Ants* and an *Insect Abundance* study.

## Field Trips 5,928 Students Reached



**In-Person**  
218 Programs  
272 Classes/Groups



**Distance Learning**  
15 Programs  
15 Classes



**Streamable Learning**  
7 Programs  
965 students



### Field Trip Scholarships

Thanks to our partners at the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation and the Jane S. Heman Foundation, last year we were able to provide field trip scholarships for 90 classes from Title 1/ low-income schools, reaching 1,487 students.



## 2024: A New Beginning!



While opening the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium certainly felt like we had crossed the finish line in many regards, in actuality it represents the beginning of a new era for our organization and for the reach and impact of our unique education programs.

We entered 2024 operating on an entirely new playing field. As the first full calendar year of operation in our new facility, there is still so much to learn in regard to what "normal" will be. And while we opened under the best operating plan we could prepare, many aspects of our plan were obviously based on our best predictions. The months ahead will certainly test those assumptions against reality.

Things like ...How much overall visitation will we see? When will be our busiest times of year? How much tourist visitation will we receive? How many butterflies do we need to "fill the house" on a weekly basis? How many volunteers do we need on a weekly basis? These, and other, factors not only impact our day to day operations, but our budget as well.

Nearly five months into the New Year, we're thrilled to report that things have been amazing. Our staff (existing and new) have been incredible. Visitation and membership are well above our initial estimates. And the enthusiastic response we've received from the community has been off-the-charts.

There's also a buzz around the Butterfly House as we get ready to install two much-anticipated new exhibits ...our leafcutter ant exhibit and our observation honey bee hive. Butterfly house aside, these will undoubtedly prove to be our most popular exhibits.

2024 will be our year to check initial estimates and make adjustments on many fronts. It will be a year of growth and learning unlike any period in our organizational history. And it will be a year of exciting exploration and discovery as the evolution of the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium continues.

Thank you for being an important part of this extraordinary journey! 🐛



### Butterfly License Plate

Since our license plate became available in late 2019, it's generated nearly \$66,000 in license plate fees to help support our unique education efforts (\$24,360 in 2023). Give your new or existing vehicle some wings, while supporting our unique programs, our amazing animals, and new facility at the same time, by getting your plate today. Contact us or visit your County Treasurer's office for more information.



**MISSOULAGIVES**

### Save the Date

The 2024 Missoula Gives campaign is May 2nd to May 3rd. With \$27,500 in matching challenges in place, free admission passes for gifts of \$50 or more, and the chance to win a Butterfly House Happy Hour event for up to 10 for a gift of \$100 or more, we hope you'll consider making a donation in celebration of our new facility! Contact Glenn at 406-317-1211 or [glenn@missoulabutterflyhouse.org](mailto:glenn@missoulabutterflyhouse.org) for more info.



MISSOULA  
**BUTTERFLY HOUSE**  
& INSECTARIUM

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## 2023 Financials

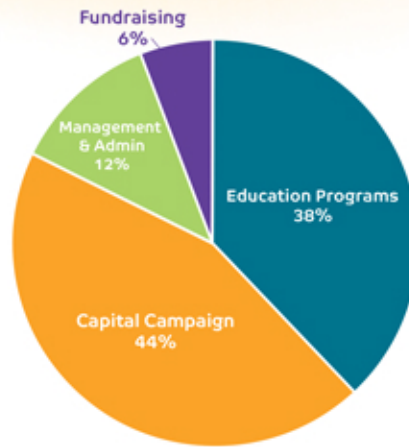
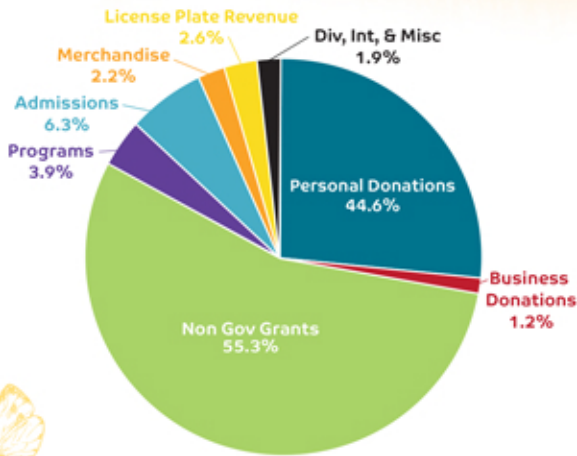
As of 12/31/23, the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium's assets totaled \$1,746,606.62.

**Total Income\*: \$938,403.56**

\*\$360,050 for Capital Campaign

**Total Expenses\*: \$882,422.91**

\*Expenses for capital campaign include: consultant fees; exhibits; furniture, fixtures & equipment; and PR & Marketing. Not shown on this chart are construction payments of \$773,233.83 (reflected by a decrease in assets).



### Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium Board of Directors

**Lisa Verlanic Fowler**, *President*  
Teacher, Florence-Carlton School

**Kathryn Herman**, *Vice President*  
Teacher Assistant, Missoula Community School

**Nicole Toone**, *Treasurer*  
Commercial Lender, First Security Bank

**Michael Carter**, *Secretary*  
Retired Wildlife Biologist

**Marcy Allen**  
Executive Director, Missoula Community Foundation

**Dr. Douglas J. Emlen**  
Montana Regents Professor of Evolutionary Biology, University of Montana

**Jen Marangelo**  
Executive Director, Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium

**Lucca Scariano**  
Financial Adviser, Edward Jones

### Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium Staff

**Miriam Bayer**  
Lead Animal Keeper

**Stacy Carr-Poole**  
Operations Director

**Shelby Fisher**  
Administrative Coordinator

**Andie Hernandez**  
Live Collections Assistant

**Madeline Kleeman**  
Museum Interpreter

**Kate Likvan**  
Gift Shop Manager

**Glenn Marangelo**  
Development Director

**Jen Marangelo**  
Executive Director

**Morgan McNeill**  
Marketing & Events Coordinator

**Hallee Olsen**  
Museum Assistant

**Brenna Shea**  
Interpretive Writer & Educator

**Ashley Sinclair**  
Admissions Associate

**Rob Taylor**  
Lead Horticulturalist

**Carolyn Taber**  
Museum Educator