

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

*where
curiosity
takes flight*



HOUSTON MUSEUM *of* NATURAL SCIENCE



“The mission of the Houston Museum of Natural Science shall be to preserve and advance the general knowledge of natural science; to enhance in individuals the knowledge of and delight in natural science and related subjects; and to maintain and promote a museum of the first class.”

HMNS.ORG

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Houston, Texas 77030
713-639-4629

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Sugar Land, Texas 77479
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President’s Letter

Science has an astonishing way of bringing people together—whether you’re 8 or 80, whether you love bugs, black holes, or both. At the Houston Museum of Natural Science, we’re all about creating those “wow” moments that spark curiosity, connect us with nature, and make learning an adventure.

2024 was a big year for HMNS. We celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Cockrell Butterfly Center, our enchanted rainforest that’s been fluttering hearts for three decades now. We also hit an all-time high in membership, proving that more and more people are finding joy, inspiration, and a sense of community under our roof. And let’s hear it for our Museum Volunteers—truly the MVPs—who bring the Museum to life every single day with their time, energy, and passion for science.

We didn’t only reflect on the past in 2024—we built for the future, too. We opened The Welch Hall: Matter & Motion, presented by the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation. It’s a bold, bright, and hands-on educational space that turns chemistry and physics into an interactive playground. During April’s total solar eclipse, our partnership with Buc-ee’s® turned Texas into one big science classroom, offering all Texas students a front-row seat to celestial wonders. And in our Morian Hall of Paleontology, new Touch & Learn panels continue to make the Museum more accessible.

As always, science education remains our primary mission. The Aramco iExplore Program continues to keep young minds buzzing with excitement, and the first phase of our new Moran Education Center gives us a solid foundation for even more discovery. Through community favorites like the Glasscock Outreach Program, H-E-B Texas Recycles Day, or Free Admission Day, brought to you by CITGO Petroleum Corporation and Houston Safe & Lock, we keep the science coming—for everyone.

All of this incredible momentum? It’s thanks to you. Your support fuels everything we do—every exhibit, every student visit, every lightbulb moment. You make this Museum what it is. So, from all of us at HMNS, thank you for being part of the journey in 2024. We can’t wait to see where we’ll go next.

With gratitude and wonder,
Joel A. Bartsch


HMNS President and CEO

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Museum by the Numbers



268,716

SPECIAL EXHIBITION VISITORS



273,669

COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER VISITORS



73,581

FREE TUESDAY ADMISSIONS



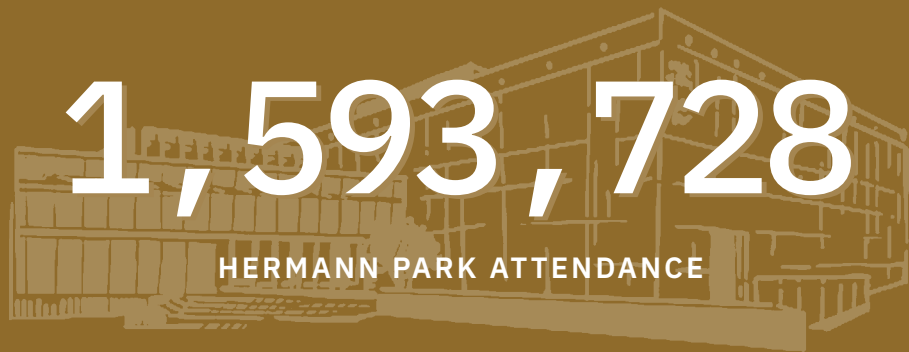
165,727

BURKE BAKER PLANETARIUM ADMISSIONS



361

BIRTHDAY PARTIES



1,593,728

HERMANN PARK ATTENDANCE



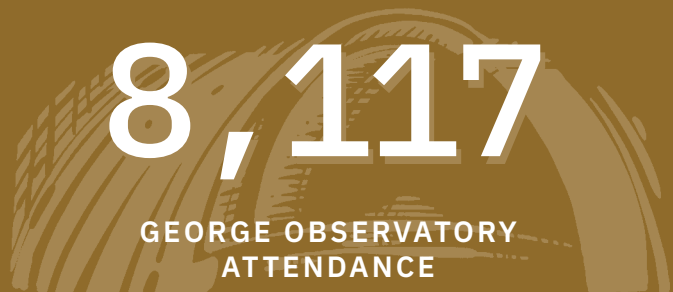
94,721

WORTHAM GIANT SCREEN THEATRE ADMISSIONS



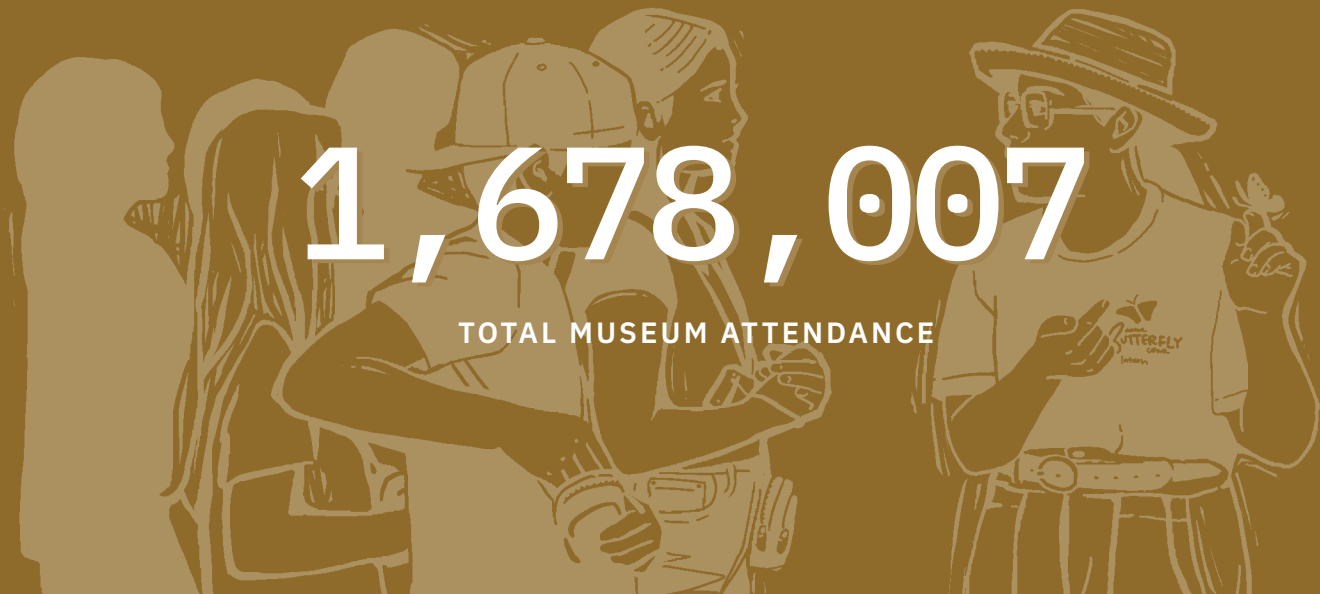
76,102

SUGAR LAND ATTENDANCE



8,117

GEORGE OBSERVATORY ATTENDANCE



1,678,007

TOTAL MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

30 Years of Wonder

THE COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER

In 2024, HMNS proudly celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Cockrell Butterfly Center, a living symbol of our mission to inspire curiosity, connect people to nature, and bring science to life. Since its opening in 1994, the Cockrell Butterfly Center has become one of the Museum’s most iconic and beloved destinations, welcoming millions of visitors into its vibrant world of tropical plants and free-flying butterflies.

What began as a visionary project, made possible through generous philanthropic support, led by Janet and Ernie H. Cockrell, has flourished into a cornerstone of science education and environmental awareness. Each year, families, students, and educators explore the marvels of entomology, ecosystems, and conservation through unforgettable, immersive experiences.

As we celebrate three decades, we thank the donors and partners who helped bring this vision to life and continue to sustain it. Your support ensures that the Cockrell Butterfly Center remains a place of wonder, learning, and transformation for generations to come.



Chuck teaches us to slow down, look closely, and “take the time.” As he reminds hurried guests, especially school groups: “You’ve gotta stop and, as they say, smell the roses.”

Photo courtesy of Manuel Arciniega.

Volunteer Spotlight

CHUCK ASAUD — FINDING JOY IN “THOSE LITTLE OL’ WINGED THINGS”

Much has changed in the more than 25 years that Chuck Asaud has volunteered at HMNS, but not his feelings. The Cockrell Butterfly Center (CBC) is still, in his words, “the place to be.”

It all started with Eleanor. “All because of her,” Chuck says with a smile. His late wife first brought him to HMNS, and what began as a shared outing soon became a lifelong calling. “Those little ol’ winged things” captured both his heart and mind—and never let go.

Chuck, a retired scientist, brings wonder and wisdom to every interaction, whether he’s speaking with school kids passing through or chatting with international visitors. “You get a front row seat to the entire life cycle,” he explains. “It’s so special. People just light up.” For him, the CBC is more than a place to volunteer: “That is my refuge.”

In the early mornings before his volunteer shift begins, Chuck savors the quiet. “I’m meditating here,” he says of those peaceful hours. He finds a deep sense of connection—to the butterflies, the visitors, and the meaning he sees in their delicate presence. “Butterflies were here before the dinosaurs,” he says. “That blew my mind.”

His favorite, the Blue Morpho, shimmers with both scientific beauty and metaphorical meaning. Chuck often reflects on the butterfly as a symbol of rebirth, transformation, and love. “I hope I am giving love and feeling. It’s something out of love. Sharing love—that’s the meaning of life.”

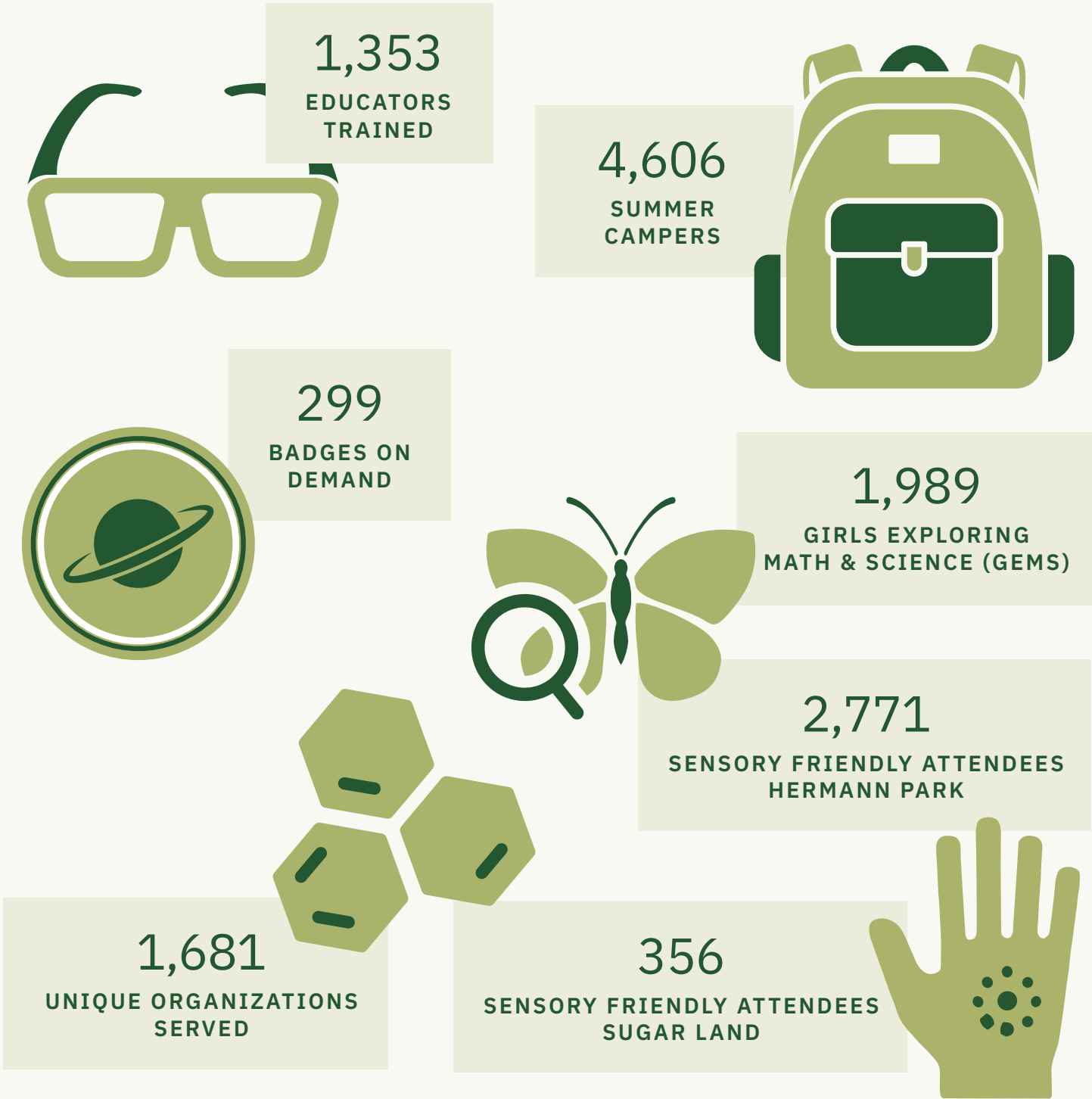
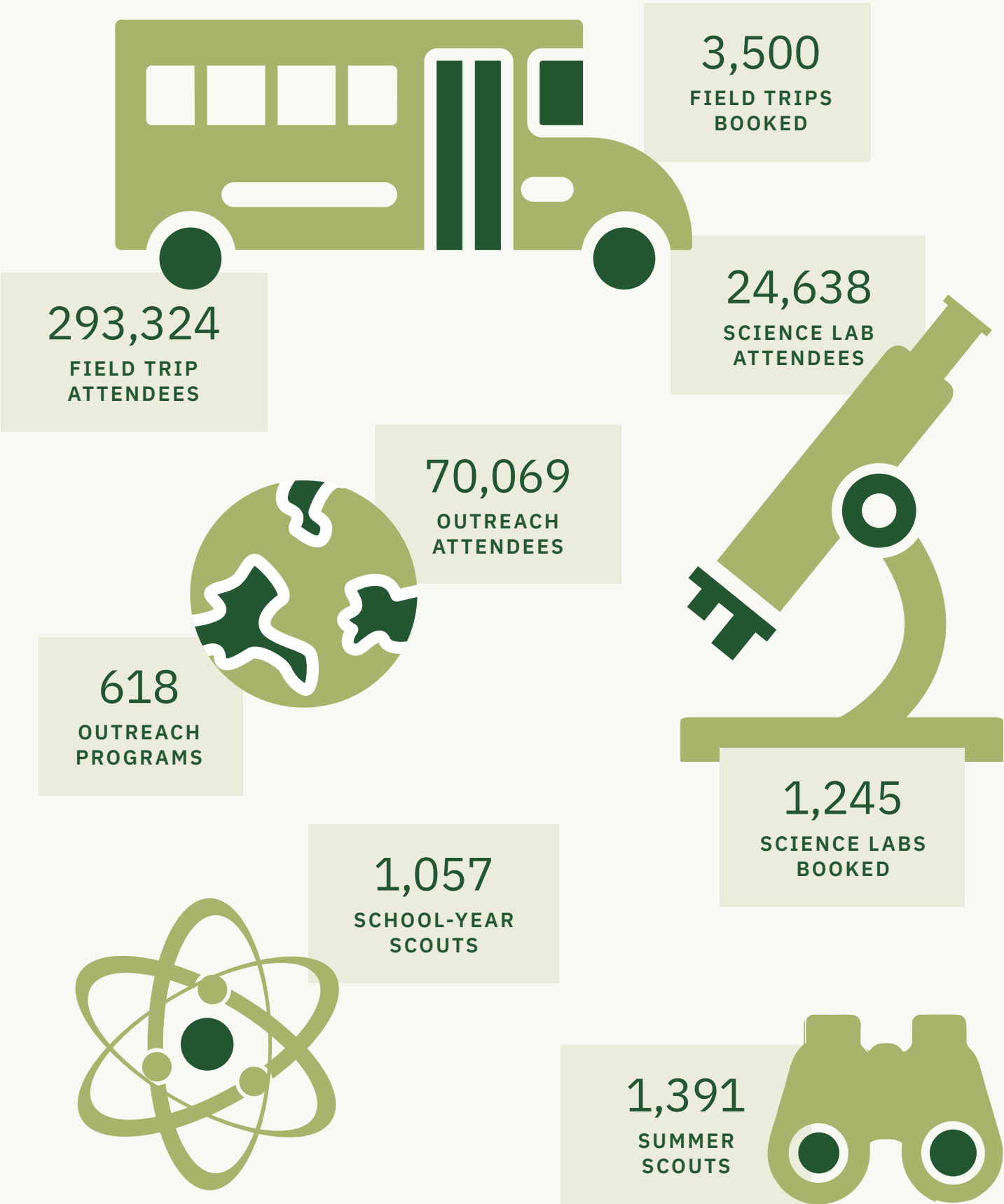
When asked how to get a butterfly to land on you, Chuck offers this:

Be quiet. Be still. Wait.

“And don’t go after them,” he adds with a knowing grin.

We are saddened to share that Chuck passed away during the production of this report. We honor Chuck and Eleanor’s memory and celebrate the lasting impact of their generosity and spirit at HMNS.

Educational Stats



TOTAL STUDENTS REACHED

423,234



Powering Discovery Together

BUC-EES® TOTALITY OVER TEXAS

Thanks to the instrumental support of Buc-ee's®, HMNS distributed a whopping one million solar eclipse viewers to 8,799 public schools across Texas in advance of the Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024. Each pair of viewers came with safety viewing instructions and an educators' curriculum guide, empowering teachers to bring real-time astronomy into their classrooms. This large-scale effort ensured that thousands of students—from bustling urban centers to small rural districts—had the rare and safe opportunity to witness a spectacular celestial event while deepening their understanding of the science behind it.

Beyond the classroom, HMNS brought the eclipse experience to life with special viewing events at both the Hermann Park and Sugar Land locations, led by the Museum's Astronomy Team. The Museum also offered guided travel experiences to Central Texas, giving participants front-row access to the path of totality. At each event, guests of all ages gathered to safely view the eclipse, take part in hands-on science activities, and explore the wonders of astronomy in real time.

Strategic partnerships like this exemplify HMNS's mission to make science accessible, exciting, and memorable for all. By working with trusted community partners, we are able to bring science education to life for thousands of students and families across Texas—both inside and far beyond its exhibit halls.

Accessibility Initiatives

TOUCH & LEARN PANELS IN THE MORIAN HALL OF PALEONTOLOGY

As part of its ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion, HMNS introduced new *Touch & Learn* panels in the Morian Hall of Paleontology—interactive tools designed to enhance the Museum experience for blind and low-vision guests.

Each summer, HMNS partners with Texas Workforce Solutions and Vocational Rehabilitation Services to connect teens with disabilities to real-world work experiences. This year’s group worked closely with Museum staff to identify objects throughout the halls that could be translated into tactile experiences.

The first panel features a T. rex wishbone and includes braille descriptions as well as audio recordings in both English and Spanish. This thoughtful addition allows guests to engage with paleontology in a new, multisensory way. Additional panels are currently in development, marking an exciting step forward in making the Museum’s rich scientific content accessible to all visitors.



Curriculum Highlight

ARAMCO iEXPLORE PROGRAM

Empowering the next generation of environmental stewards, the Aramco iExplore Program offers fifth-grade students a dynamic, TEKS-aligned field trip experience that brings science to life in the Museum’s exhibit halls. Made possible through the generous support of Aramco, this engaging program and its free curriculum have inspired curiosity and supported classroom learning since its launch in 2013.

In 2024, approximately 2,000 students participated in Aramco iExplore, gaining a stronger understanding of ecological concepts and showing measurable improvement in biodiversity-related STAAR areas. Students explored biodiversity and ecology firsthand through immersive exhibits—including the Cockrell Butterfly Center—and engaging live animal presentations. A complimentary curriculum guide reinforces learning before, during, and after the visit, directly supporting science objectives.

Aramco’s investment in hands-on science education helps ensure students from across the region have access to high-impact STEM learning opportunities, sparking curiosity and a lasting appreciation for the natural world.



Laying the Groundwork for Lifelong Learning

OPENING OF THE MORAN EDUCATION CENTER-PHASE I

In 2024, HMNS completed Phase I of the Education Campaign, a major step toward transforming the Museum’s 72,370-square-foot Lower Level into the state-of-the-art Moran Education Center. Once a network of blank beige hallways, the space is now a vibrant, immersive environment designed to spark curiosity and deepen learning for the more than 500,000 students, teachers, and families who pass through each year.

Colorful murals now line the walls, floors, and ceilings—depicting natural biomes, indigenous plants and animals, ecosystems, and other curriculum-based science concepts. These dynamic visuals serve both as educational tools and wayfinding guides, turning the entire Lower Level into a cohesive and engaging learning space.

The transformation has been met with enthusiasm from educators and parents alike. Students linger to explore, interact, and learn—turning a once-transitional space into a destination.

Looking ahead, Phase II, slated for completion in 2028, will establish a first-in-class Early Childhood Learning Center. This dedicated space will serve children ages 2–6 and provide a welcoming environment for sensory-sensitive visitors—audiences not currently reached by existing programming.

The Education Campaign represents more than a renovation. It reflects HMNS’s long-term commitment to serving learners of all ages and abilities with spaces that inspire, inform, and adapt to the needs of the community.



THE FOLLOWING DONORS HAVE MADE THIS WORK POSSIBLE

THE W.T. AND LOUISE J. MORAN FOUNDATION

THE BENTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

THE MELBERN G. AND SUSANNE M. GLASSCOCK FOUNDATION

KINDER MORGAN FOUNDATION

THE JOHN M. O’QUINN FOUNDATION

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Matter & Motion

A BOLD NEW ERA OF SCIENCE AT HMNS

The Welch Hall: Matter & Motion, presented by the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation, stands as one of the most transformative additions in the history of HMNS. Spanning nearly 16,000 square feet, this innovative hall invites visitors to explore the dynamic forces that shape our universe—chemistry and physics—and their profound role in daily life.

Designed with accessibility and engagement in mind, the exhibit features 10 immersive galleries that break down complex scientific concepts into learning experiences that are fun, interactive, and deeply relevant. Whether through hands-on models, bold graphics, or real-time experiments, Matter & Motion transforms abstract science into meaningful, memorable discovery.

Each section of Matter & Motion contributes to a larger story—how science touches everything, from the makeup of the human body to the infrastructure of a city. Guests begin with the Houston Connection, grounding the exhibit in local industry and innovation. From there, they move through topics like Quarks to Quasars, It’s Elementary!, and Biochemistry: The Matter of Life, gaining a broad but accessible understanding of the natural world.

Other highlights include Basic Physics: Matter in Motion, Crafting Matter: Nano to Mega, and Astrophysics: Go Big!, each showcasing science at different scales, and the impact of physics and chemistry in technology, engineering, and even outer space. The Alchemy Hall offers historical context, while the Frontiers of Science gallery looks ahead, exploring emerging research and cutting-edge breakthroughs.

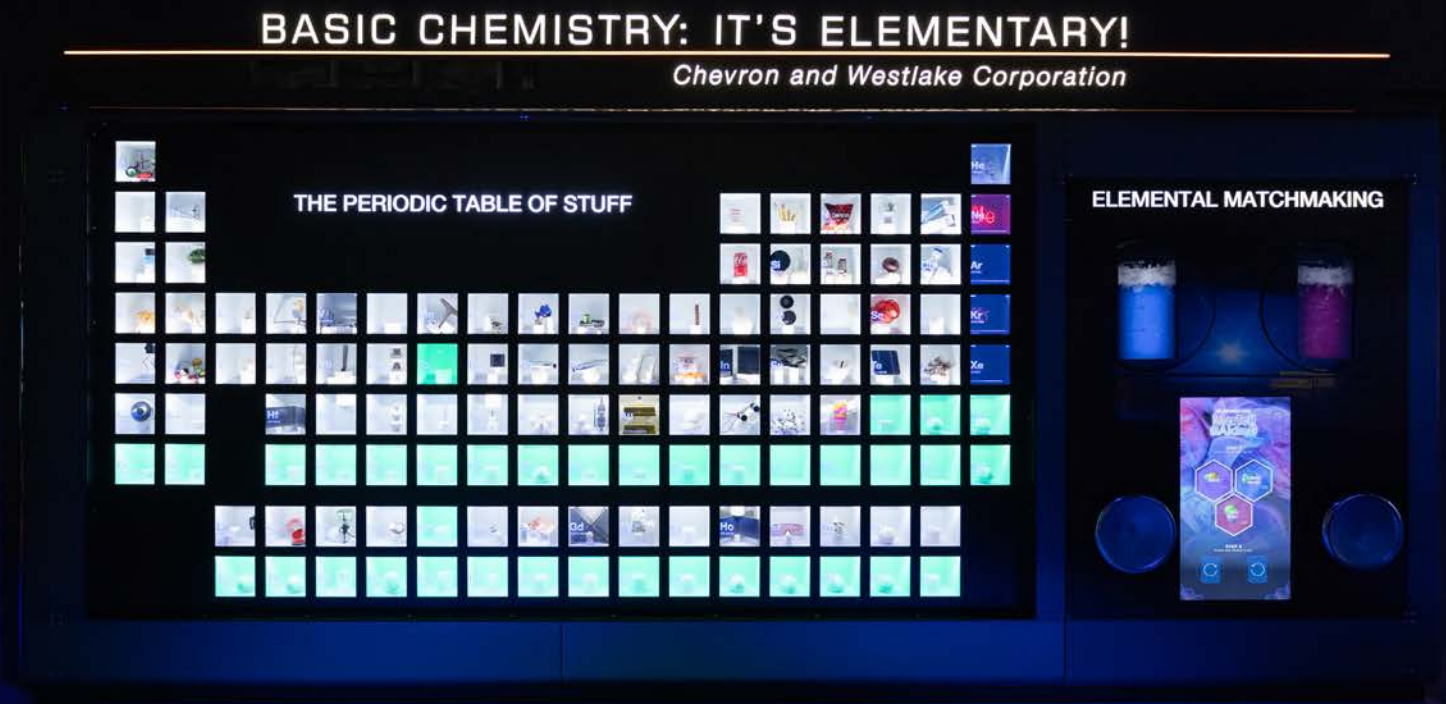


This connection between big ideas and local relevance is what sets Matter & Motion apart. By tying science to the industries and innovations that define Houston, the hall gives visitors a powerful sense of place and a deeper appreciation for how science affects the world around them.

Since its debut in March 2024, Matter & Motion has become a centerpiece of the HMNS experience. In its first year alone, the hall welcomed 1,062,630 visitors, making it one of the most visited exhibit spaces in the Museum. More than 75,000 member households accessed the hall free of charge, returning again and again to explore its engaging content.

A dedicated team of 159 volunteer docents were trained as subject experts and led 47 guided tours for more than 2,000 guests, extending the learning through dialogue, questions, and live demonstrations. One of the most popular features is the Shell Demonstration Lab, where science comes alive through real-time experiments that wow guests and deepen understanding.

With its central location on the Museum’s main floor, Matter & Motion is more than an exhibit—it’s a starting point for exploration. It reflects HMNS’s mission to spark curiosity, celebrate discovery, and connect people to the science that shapes their lives.



GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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ALBERT AND ETHEL HERZSTEIN
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

THE GORDON A. CAIN
FOUNDATION

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Ultimately, I hope visitors take away the understanding that science isn't a static body of knowledge, but a dynamic, ongoing process of discovery.

—NEAL DESAI
Exhibits Director

Q&A with Neal Desai, Exhibits Director

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE IN DEVELOPING MATTER & MOTION?

My team and I were responsible for developing all the digital media, animations, and interactive elements throughout Matter & Motion. This encompassed everything from the animated atoms sculpture at the entrance to the complex interactive elements like the periodic table interactive floor.

We designed each interactive with multiple engagement levels to appeal to different learning styles and age groups. Our goal was to create “information layering” where casual visitors could enjoy the visual spectacle and hands-on engagement, while more curious visitors could dive deeper into the scientific concepts.

WHY ARE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT IN A SCIENCE MUSEUM SETTING, ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG LEARNERS?

Interactivity transforms complex concepts into memorable experiences, particularly for young learners who absorb knowledge best through play and hands-on exploration. It shifts science from something you read or watch into something you do and discover, building lasting connections and deeper understanding.

DID YOU TEST THE INTERACTIVES WITH KIDS BEFORE INSTALLATION? WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

Testing with our target audience was absolutely essential and often the most illuminating part of our development process. We conducted several rounds of prototype testing with children and families, using everything from simple cardboard mockups to functioning digital prototypes.

Their feedback fundamentally changed our approach. We realized we needed to make the exhibit more exploratory and less guided.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND DESIGNING ONE OF THE INTERACTIVES IN MATTER & MOTION?

The “Quarks to Quasars” experience is a great example of our creative process. We started with an intimidating challenge: how do we help visitors comprehend the almost unimaginable scale of our universe, from subatomic particles to galactic structures?

We began with extensive research, consulting with physicists and science educators to identify the key concepts that would give visitors a meaningful understanding of scale. Then came the conceptual development—we envisioned a wrap-around, floor-to-ceiling projection that would create an immersive journey.

The technical development was particularly complex. We needed to create animations that accurately represented scale while remaining visually engaging. We developed a series of scenes that allowed visitors to control the pace of their journey, starting with subatomic particles and zooming out through atoms, cells, humans, planets, and finally to the scale of galaxies and the cosmos.

Testing was crucial. We initially found that visitors were overwhelmed by the information, so we refined the experience to include pause points with focused information about key transitions in scale.

The result is an exhibit that consistently engages visitors and prompts discussions about our place in the universe—exactly the kind of engaged learning we aimed to create.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE VISITORS TAKE AWAY FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH THE INTERACTIVES?

Beyond specific scientific facts, I hope visitors leave with a transformed relationship with science itself. Many people enter science museums with the belief that chemistry and physics are abstract, difficult subjects accessible only to specialists. If our interactives are successful, visitors leave understanding that these disciplines are actually powerful lenses for understanding the everyday world around them.

Middle School Minds Meet Big Science

THE GLASSCOCK OUTREACH PROGRAM

In 2024, HMNS expanded the reach of the Glasscock Outreach Program, delivering dynamic science programming to 2,497 students at 25 organizations across the Greater Houston area. Designed to engage middle school students—a critical stage of development—the Program brings the wonders of natural science directly to after-school sites that serve children who may never have visited the Museum District.

The curriculum offers a range of flexible, interactive presentations, including topics like Dinosaur Discovery, Leonardo da Vinci's Innovations, Our Place in Space, and the engineering marvels of Siege Machines. Each lesson is designed to excite curiosity, reinforce STEM objectives taught in the classroom, and inspire a deeper interest in the natural world.



H-E-B Texas Recycles Day

RECYCLING IN ACTION: H-E-B AND HMNS PARTNER FOR CHANGE

In November, H-E-B and HMNS partnered to celebrate Texas Recycles Day and engage the Houston community on the environmental benefits of recycling.

As part of the initiative, visitors were encouraged to bring plastic single-use bags and bottles to HMNS in exchange for free admission vouchers to the Cockrell Butterfly Center.

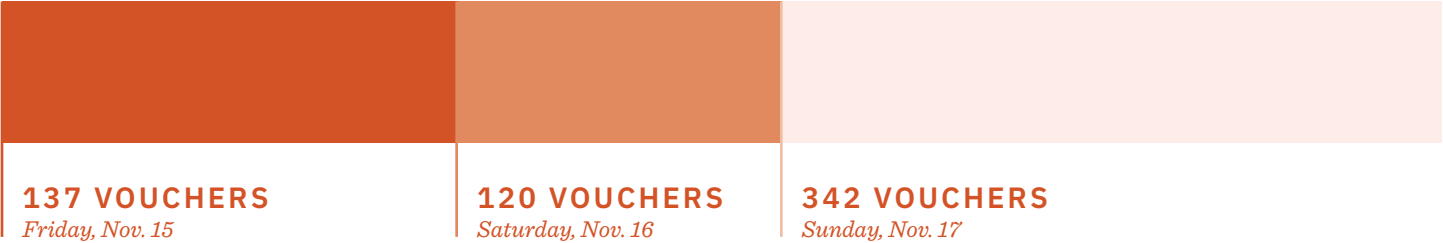
The event was a tremendous success, with 599 participants collectively contributing 237 plastic bottles and 458 plastic bags for recycling!



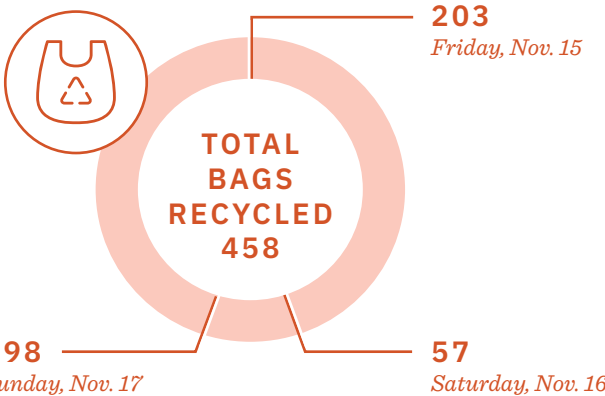
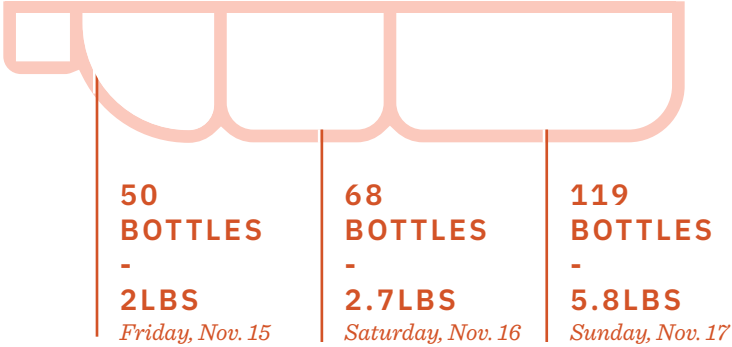
2024 Texas Recycles Day Numbers

CBC VOUCHERS REDEEMED

TOTAL REDEEMED: 599



TOTAL BOTTLES RECYCLED 237 - 10.5LBS



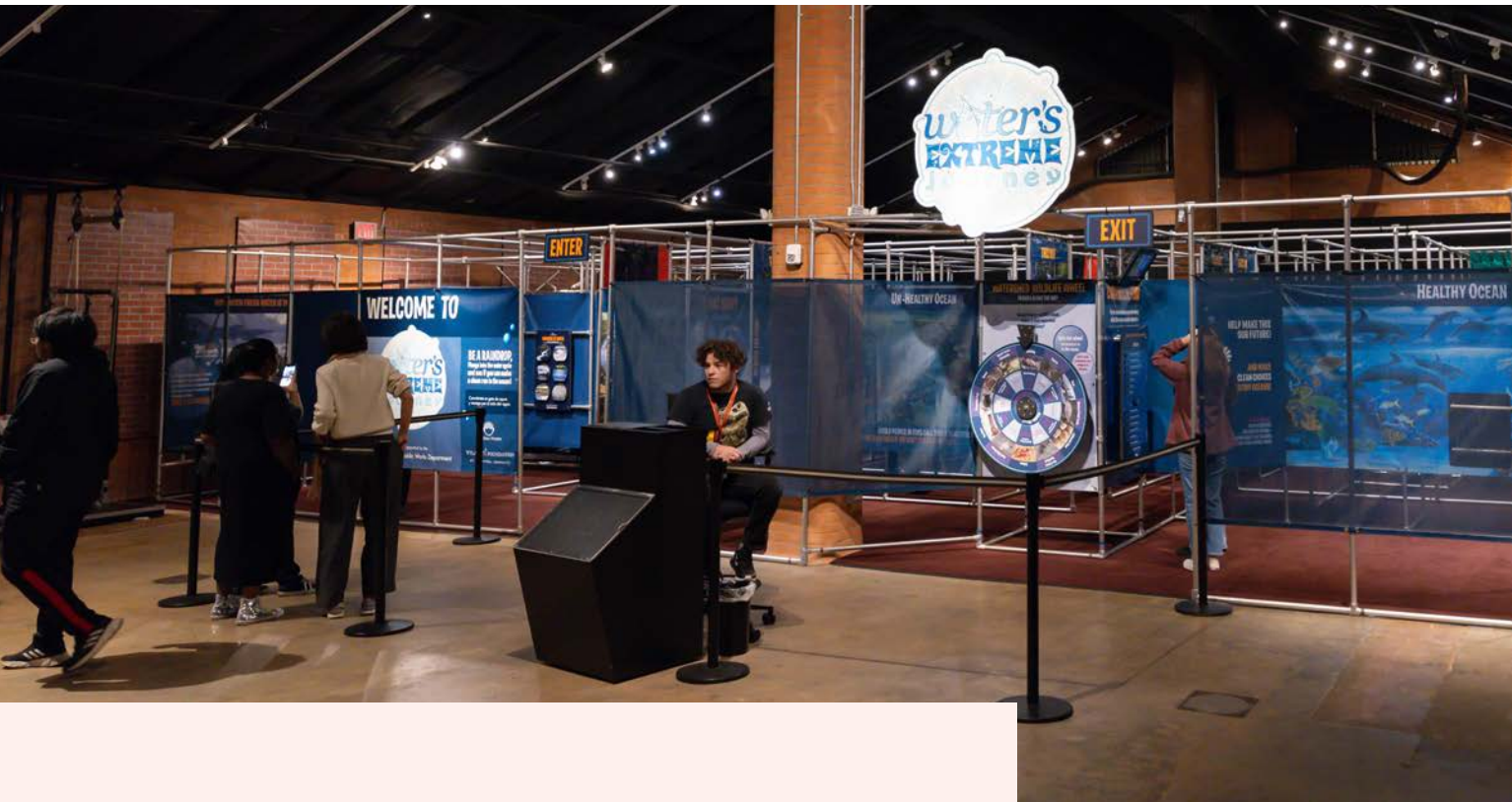
Free to Wonder

FREE ADMISSION DAY PRESENTED BY CITGO PETROLEUM CORPORATION AND HOUSTON SAFE & LOCK

On August 20, 2024, all Museum guests enjoyed complimentary admission to HMNS’s 16 permanent exhibit halls, such as the Laurie and Reed Morian Cabinet of Curiosities, as well as special discounts to featured exhibitions and venues.

This initiative reflects HMNS’s deep commitment to accessibility and inclusion. By removing financial barriers, Free Admission Day opens the doors of scientific discovery to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to explore the Museum. For many, it is a first-time visit, sparking curiosity, inspiring future learning, and fostering a lifelong connection to science.

Strategic partnerships are vital to making these efforts possible. With the generous support of CITGO Petroleum Corporation and Houston Safe & Lock, HMNS welcomed 5,101 visitors on this special day. These collaborations not only expand the Museum’s reach but also demonstrate a shared investment in education, equity, and community enrichment—reinforcing the Museum’s mission to serve all members of the community.



Partnership in Action

HMNS SUGAR LAND AND THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

The partnership between HMNS at Sugar Land and the City of Sugar Land Utilities Department is a proud example of how strategic collaboration can inspire meaningful community impact. Each year, the City sponsors a special exhibit at HMNS Sugar Land focused on vital topics like water conservation and extreme weather, issues of critical importance to the region.

In 2024, the exhibit *Ocean Bound!* continued this tradition, inviting visitors of all ages to explore from where their water comes, why conservation matters, and how everyday actions can create lasting environmental change. Through hands-on stations and interactive learning, families left inspired to think more deeply about their connection to natural resources.

For the City of Sugar Land, partnering with HMNS at Sugar Land furthers their commitment to public education, sustainability, and community engagement. It also strengthens the Museum’s role as a source of local pride, a place where Sugar Land’s young scientists, future engineers, and lifelong learners can discover, explore, and grow.

HMNS Sugar Land is proud to serve as a cultural anchor in the region, and this partnership highlights the shared values that unite the Museum and the City: education, stewardship, and civic pride. Together, we are empowering the next generation to make smart choices that shape a stronger future for Sugar Land and beyond.



Volunteers

Powered by the Stars

Since 1986, HMNS and the Fort Bend Astronomy Club (FBAC) have shared a bold vision: to spark wonder and discovery through astronomy outreach. What began as weekly Halley’s Comet viewings at Brazos Bend State Park led to the creation of the George Observatory, where FBAC members have volunteered since day one, operating the East Dome telescope and inspiring visitors of all ages.

In 2024, this enduring partnership reached new heights with FBAC’s investment in major upgrades to the East Dome telescope and equipment. Together, HMNS and FBAC are expanding access to the cosmos, one stargazing moment at a time. Through shared expertise and passion, HMNS and FBAC continue to create extraordinary opportunities for the public to experience astronomy firsthand—building connections to science that last a lifetime.





Sharing Culture, Celebrating Community

In honor of Native American Heritage Month in November, HMNS partnered with the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas to present a daylong celebration of culture, tradition, and storytelling. Visitors experienced the power of drumbeats, vibrant dances, and live demonstrations by skilled artisans. Each performance reflected the enduring strength and continuity of Indigenous traditions. Visitors also explored the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas to discover a wide-ranging narrative of Native innovation from 10,000-year-old hunting tools to modern-day art and design. The event created space for meaningful connection with the histories and ongoing contributions of Native communities.



Museum Store

Houston artists Ruben and Tristan have turned their passion for insects into “Bug in the Box,” a business that artfully preserves and showcases insects. Their creations grace homes, museums, and galleries, blending the beauty of nature with artistic design. Ruben attended University of Houston for graphic design and uses his artistic background to enhance the presentation of insects. His Houston upbringing and Mexican heritage influence his sophisticated approach, making each display a blend of art and nature, often encased within art itself as a multi-dimensional aesthetic display.

For a full selection of pieces from Bug in the Box, please visit the Museum Store.



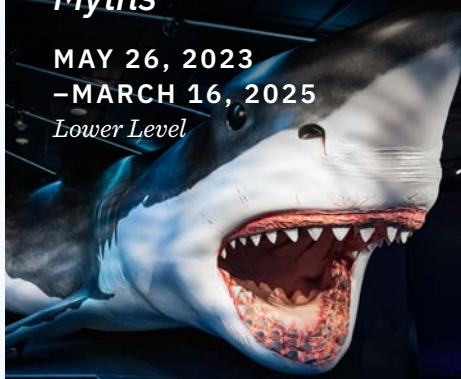
2024 Exhibitions

ON-GOING EXHIBITS

King Tut's Tomb Discovery Experience
OCTOBER 28, 2022 –CURRENT
Dan L Duncan Family Wing



Sharks! The Meg, The Monsters & the Myths
MAY 26, 2023 –MARCH 16, 2025
Lower Level



Everyday Fabergé
AUGUST 4, 2023 –JULY 7, 2024
McFerrin Gallery in Brown Hall



Gaia, Earth by Luke Jerram
APRIL 12–28, 2024
Cullen Grand Hall

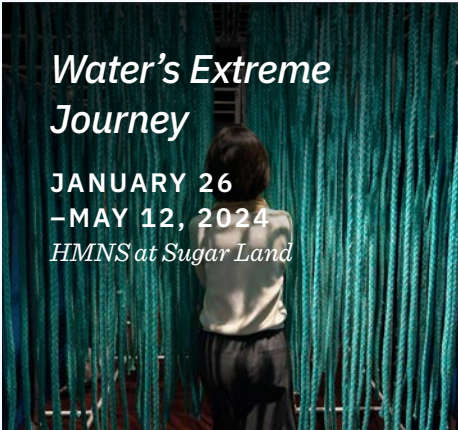


Axiom Space Station
MAY 3–SEPTEMBER 15, 2024
Cullen Grand Hall



NEW EXHIBITS 2024

Water's Extreme Journey
JANUARY 26 –MAY 12, 2024
HMNSat Sugar Land



The Welch Hall: Matter & Motion presented by the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation
OPENED MARCH 9, 2024
Main Level



Death By Natural Causes
JUNE 28, 2024–ONGOING
Dan L Duncan Family Wing



Select Highlights from the David P. Wilbur and Anthony Gugliotti Barber Bottle Collections
AUGUST 1–5, 2024
Brown Gallery



Moon by Luke Jerram
MARCH 22–APRIL 9, 2024
Cullen Grand Hall



Views: Inside-Outside The Works of Manual Arciniega and Brian Zievert
APRIL 1–JULY 7, 2024
Hamill Gallery



American Antique Glass Masterpieces
AUGUST 1–18, 2024
Hamill Gallery



Fabergé Eggs and Timeless Treasures
SEPTEMBER 27, 2024 –SEPTEMBER 2026
McFerrin Gallery in Brown Hall



Trains Over Texas
NOVEMBER 22, 2024–JANUARY 12, 2025
Cullen Grand Hall



2024 Collections Highlights

Anthropology

Artist and skateboarder Di’Orr Greenwood brings her Navajo heritage to life through vibrant, contemporary design. At first glance, her work may appear simple, but each detail carries deep cultural meaning and reflects the wisdom and traditions of her community.

In these two pairs of custom skateboarding shoes, Greenwood incorporates Indigenous symbolism to affirm the continued presence and resilience of her people. The insoles represent her homeland, while every motif on the shoes holds special significance—together declaring, “We are still here.”

This message resonates strongly within the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas, where Greenwood’s work bridges past and present. A future installation will feature her new skateboard designs and biographical highlights, further underscoring the vitality of Indigenous creativity and identity today.



2024.29

Two Pairs of Skateboard Sneakers

Di’Orr Greenwood, Diné

GIFT OF JOHN DANIELSON

Egyptology

This remarkable pair of larger-than-life sized eyes—each measuring 5½ inches wide—is crafted from white stone (alabaster or limestone, pending analysis) and obsidian, set within copper-alloy frames. From their size, materials, and form, they can be identified as inlays from the exterior of a rectangular coffin dating to Egypt’s Middle Kingdom.

During this period, coffins were often adorned with pairs of inlaid eyes on one side, allowing the deceased to symbolically gaze out toward the rising sun and the world beyond. The scale and quality of this pair suggest they once belonged to an exceptionally fine and luxurious coffin.

These striking inlays make a notable addition to the Hall of Ancient Egypt’s funerary display. HMNS currently exhibits a smaller Middle Kingdom coffin on loan, decorated with painted eyes; by contrast, this new acquisition demonstrates the extraordinary craftsmanship and material sophistication of higher-status burials. The use of Egyptian white stone, copper alloy derived from Sinai ores, and obsidian sourced from Abyssinia highlights the far-reaching trade networks and technical ingenuity of ancient Egyptian artisans.

2024.10

Pair of Sarcophagus Eyes

Middle Kingdom Egypt

Alabaster, black obsidian in copper alloy frames

MUSEUM PURCHASE



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73

SALVAGES



Critter Crawl: It’s Magic!

Critter Crawl: It’s Magic, presented by Frost Bank, was a spellbinding day of science, surprises, and serious fun! Chaired by Julia Morales Clark and Matt Clark, Adrienne and Jared Crane, and Krystal and Garrett Thompson, this extraordinary event gave families exclusive access to *Sharks! The Meg, The Monsters & The Myths* and a sneak peek at the all-new Matter & Motion Hall. From witnessing the magic of metamorphosis to getting hands-on with creepy crawlers at the insect petting zoo, and even daring to taste a tempura scorpion, every corner of the Museum held a new wonder. Kids uncovered glowing fossils and minerals, created arts and crafts, and enjoyed a special movie screening in the Wortham Giant Screen Theatre, while adults sipped coffee and mimosas.

The event raised more than \$207,500, ensuring HMNS continues to spark curiosity and inspire young scientists.



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RAISED



2024 Gala
Big Energy!

Big Energy! brought the heat on March 2, 2024, as guests traded formalwear for neon lights, electric brights, and anything that glowed! Chaired by Michelle and Alan Smith, this high-voltage evening transformed HMNS into an upscale ‘80s club, buzzing with excitement, surprises, and, of course, the legendary Joel Bartsch silent auction. Guests bid on an electrifying lineup of items, from rare gems and fossils to a 1983 DeLorean DMC-12 and a spot on the exclusive Total Eclipse Expedition.

It was an unforgettable night of power, passion, and philanthropy—raising more than \$1,828,000 to support Museum operations and ignite a passion for science in nearly two million visitors and 500,000 students.



Excellence in Science Luncheon

For more than 30 years, the *Excellence in Science Luncheon* has celebrated outstanding STEM education, recognizing exceptional students and teachers through an endowed fund from The Cockrell Foundation. In 2024, the Ann and Johnny Johnson Family proudly chaired the event, warmly welcoming more than 300 guests for an inspiring afternoon devoted to celebrating science, education, and discovery. This year’s event featured legendary ethologist and conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall, who shared a powerful message of HOPE, highlighting the impact of education, curiosity, and action in shaping a better future. Guests were captivated by her insights, reinforcing the Museum’s mission to ignite wonder and discovery in young minds.

An incredible \$771,202 was raised to support HMNS youth education programs, including school tours, outreach initiatives, teacher workshops, and educator open houses—ensuring the next generation of scientists, explorers, and innovators continues to thrive.



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Jingle Tree at HMNS Sugar Land

On November 21, 2024, HMNS Sugar Land celebrated the holiday season with *Jingle Tree: Festive Finale*, presented by Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital and Honorary Chairs Judi Dai and Catalina Flores-Rau. Guests enjoyed a lively evening of entertainment, curated bites and beverages, and final bidding on beautifully decorated designer trees and holiday décor.

The event raised \$122,713, supporting HMNS Sugar Land’s partnerships with more than 150 Fort Bend area schools and 40 local nonprofits. Proceeds also help expand Museum access for seniors and more than 13,500 school-aged children—ensuring that science learning and discovery remain accessible to all.

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