

HARRIS NATURE CENTER FOUNDATION

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 will be a year remembered as a year of significant change and activity for the Harris Nature Center Foundation. Kit Rich, the Director of the Harris Nature Center since its inception in 1997, retired in August this year. Kit was significantly responsible for developing the facilities and programming for the center. As an *ex-officio* member of our board she was our liaison to the township. With Kit's encouragement the foundation board decided to add a new concept in 2019. Music in nature was inaugurated in late summer and early fall with 3 free concerts in the woods. This concept provided great music in a casual setting. Guests were encouraged to bring food for picnics and to wander the grounds during the performances. This small venue attracted 200 attendees. The foundation provided remuneration of \$1,650.00 to the participating musicians. Plans are already being developed to expand and improve a concert series next year.

We were also very fortunate to gain two new heads of the Harris Nature Center who have many years experience at the Harris Nature Center. Kati Adams and Allison Goodman are now in charge of the center. They are busy putting their stamp on the facility and encouraging new and exciting programs. Because they are known to the foundation there has been a smooth and exciting transition. It is probable that there will be an expansion of activities both for the center and foundation.

In January 2019 the foundation held an on-line auction for a tour to the top of the Mackinac Bridge for two. The package included the tour to the top as well as a night stay at the Grand Hotel, ferry rides to Mackinac Island, fudge and an historical carriage ride around the island. The actual auction was quite exciting. The package was purchased by a person from Santa Clara, California. The final bid was for \$2,700.

A Winter Wonderland Program was held by the Nature Center in January. The Foundation assisted with volunteers and donations of refreshments. At the same time the Foundation conducted a very successful silent auction consisting primarily of dining gift cards. Proceeds from that auction were \$1,330.00.

The foundation was also busy assisting in the plans for a new pavilion with engraved brick patio, bathrooms and an observation deck. The township is to build the pavilion and bathrooms. The foundation is spearheading the sales of the engraved bricks for the patio. Over \$5,000 dollars has been raised for the engraved brick patio in 2019. The sales will continue into the next year based on space availability. The Kiwanis have pledged to help with brick sales to commercial establishments in the area.

Due to the generosity of our donors, the foundation is able to take on the total construction of the observation deck. A \$25,000 grant was secured from the Capitol Region Community Foundation, which was matched through two donations, one of \$20,000 and one of \$5,000. Included on the handicapped accessible deck will be a couple of commercial binocular stands. The project will hopefully be completed in March or April 2020.

Another fund raiser was held at Culver's this summer. The Foundation board participated by providing orders to customers inside and providing orders to drive-up window customers. Some board members did so well they were offered jobs. The foundation board received a portion of the evening's proceeds in the amount of \$441 as well as developing some good community relations.

A committee has been established in the board to evaluate and improve our website. Included will be a process to keep the website modern and up-to-date while maintaining connectivity with the Meridian Township website. The committee is receiving assistance from outside professionals.

One of the foundation's priorities every year is to get kids into nature. This year is no exception. Progress is being made in getting kids involved with nature. Participation is increasing every year. The foundation provides scholarships to schools that are unable to send their students to the Nature Center for outdoor lessons. This year the Foundation provided \$1,448.00 in the form of 12 school bus scholarships

There were a record 1475 participants at the Nature Center Halloween Adventures. Foundation board members volunteered time at this event doing such jobs as parking lot attendant, fire builder, Piñata referee, attendance takers and refreshment servers. Board members also donated refreshments to help make this celebration successful.

Besides these efforts by the Harris Nature Center Foundation and the staffing changes at the Center it should be noted that the Harris Nature Center had a record number of 440 children participating in their Summer Camp in 2019. They hosted 7 weeks of Annie's Big Nature Lesson serving 290 students. Finally, the Nature Center hosted 17,073 visitors in 2019. This number includes drop-ins and program participants, but it does not include other casual visitors to the Center.

Due to additional donations and some good investments the Harris Nature Center Foundation Endowment Fund increased \$6,712.54 to \$24,270.75 in 2019. These funds are being managed by the Capital Region Community Foundation. Overall, the Harris Nature Center Foundation finished the year in sound fiscal condition with a Total Liabilities and Equity of \$115,783.23. This will place the organization in a good position to complete its obligations for the projects started this year that will be completed next year. It will also place the organization in a good position to assist the Nature Center in enhancing their programming. The Board of Directors looks forward to another exciting year.

In order to provide the public with information about the Foundation, the board voted to have our minutes and additional information available on-line. This information will be easily available in a new web-site being developed. And hopefully implemented in 2020.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

December 31, 2019

Assets

Carryover from 2018	\$46,865.84
Net Income	\$54,646.64
Endowment	\$14,270.75
Total Assets	\$ 115,783.23