



PORT DISCOVERY
Children's Museum

ANNUAL REPORT

FY2024



PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

FY2024

The close of the fiscal year has been a joyful reminder of Port Discovery's place in our community, as we reflected on a significant milestone – the Museum's 25th Anniversary! Celebrations kicked-off in January with a special media event, and continued through the year with signature educational themed weekends, a very notable Play It Forward gala in April, and culminated with a community birthday bash in June that invited families, past and present, to visit Port Discovery for a free day of play! All of these exciting celebrations happened alongside our ongoing, high-quality programming, which form the core of Port Discovery's work. I am so proud to share notable highlights, such as:

- Our Parents At Play program expanded to serve the first cohort of Grandparents At Play! Hosted in partnership with the Baltimore County Jewish Community Center, this program provided caregiving resources and education to one dozen grandparents and their young grandchildren.
- The Museum selected three artists to participate in our inaugural Artist Exhibit Program, which invites local creatives to share their artwork upon our walls and reach the next generation of museum-goers. Regional artists Kay Lee and Gary Mullen installed new painted works that have enlivened our second-floor walls. Baltimore-based Bridget Cimino transformed our Atrium south wall with an amazing mural that pays homage to the water- and landscape of the Chesapeake.
- The launch of the Discovery Crew, a youth ambassador program that invited 15 exceptional young folk, ages 4 to 10, to share their voices with the Museum. Our Crew members spent the past months participating in special events, reporting on Museum happenings, and test driving new Museum programs.
- PlayMakers continues to grow as a necessary and vital program for Maryland families. PlayMakers visitorship grew again, this year by 30%, and families are coming to Port Discovery from as far away as Hagerstown and Washington County.

We had so much to celebrate in FY2024, all of which could not have been done without the support of our devoted Board of Directors, dedicated Museum staff, generous funders, and YOU – the parents, teachers, advocates, and caregivers who understand how important it is for our city and region to have a robust and thriving children's museum. After reading this report, we hope you too remain inspired by the work Port Discovery is doing, and we look forward to partnering with you in the next year and beyond!

With gratitude,



Carter Arnot Polakoff
President and CEO

FY2024 By the Numbers

194,401

Total attendance between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024

6,701

Museum memberships sold or renewed

22,922

Students and teachers who came to the Museum as part of an in-person field trip, 62% of which represent Title 1 schools

17,863

PlayMakers attendance (a 30% increase from FY23!)

3,178

Attendance for \$10 Community Days

732

Parents, grandparents, caregivers and their young children who received direct service as part of a Parents at Play cohort, our signature multigenerational program that provides parenting resources, tools, and strategies to caregivers in support of play-based learning and early childhood development

4,750

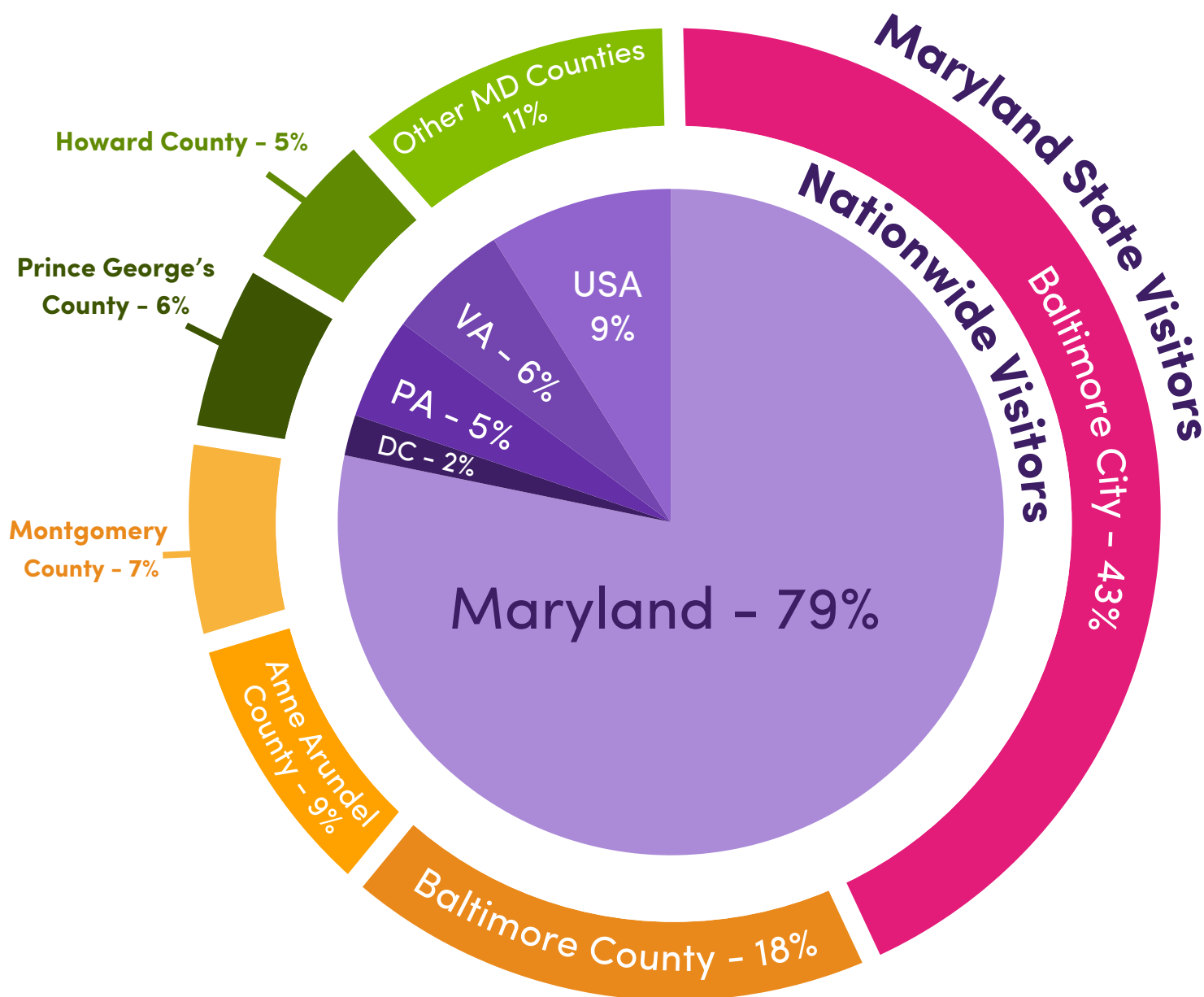
Military service personnel and veterans who came as part of the Salute the Troops program, including over 150 families who came for a free evening of play-based learning at Port Discovery's USO Night

Economic Impact

- The Museum employed 65 full and part-time staff
- 50% of visitors receive free or reduced entry through our various access initiatives
- Port Discovery invested \$1 million on goods and services in the community
- Hosted 233 corporate volunteers from ten regional businesses who served over 1,000 hours assisting on essential Museum projects
- Provided unlimited free admission tickets to health partners such as Johns Hopkins Hospital's Kennedy Krieger Institute, Believe in Tomorrow, Casey Cares, Mt Washington Pediatric Hospital, and Ronald McDonald House as part of our Nonprofit Partner Access Fund.

FY2024 Geographic Visitor Spread

Visitors from all Maryland counties came to Port Discovery for a day of purposeful learning with play in FY2024!





On January 18, 2024 Port Discovery announced the launch of two transformative initiatives that will set the stage for the Museum's next phase of growth. The At Play Learning Institute and Exhibit Master Plan will confirm Port Discovery's role as a community hub and learning lab on the science of play.

At Play Learning Institute formally ties together Port Discovery's multigenerational programs under one educational unit that leverages the distinct assets of a children's museum as a play-based learning lab. It will be a hub that offers training, workshops, service hours, and resources to strengthen those who have the most impact on a child's wellbeing and positive development – Maryland's parents, guardians, and educators.

The Exhibit Master Plan is an inspiring and ambitious 5-year, \$17.5 million initiative that transforms Port Discovery into a state-of-the-art children's educational space. Plans include a space fantasy STEAM exhibit, low-sensory space, teaching kitchen and market, and ADA-accessible sky climber.

Community Birthday Bash

On June 2, 2024, Port Discovery hosted one of the most important events of the anniversary year – a Community Birthday Bash! For this event, we opened our doors for a free party to celebrate 25 years of learning and play. The day-long fest saw over 800 families who engaged with feature guest artists, performances, treats, and treasures that activated the Museum inside and out. The Community Birthday Bash was our way of saying THANK YOU to all of the children and families who have made memories at Port Discovery over the years.



HOPS & VINES

On Saturday, February 24, 2024, Port Discovery celebrated the grown-up kids in all of us with Hops & Vines, our signature friend-raising party that brought together the best breweries and wineries from around the region for an evening of premier tastings and merriment.

The event brought in a crowd of over 500 party-goers and raised over \$10,000 in celebration of the Museum's 25th Anniversary.

Special thanks to all 2024 Hops & Vines participating vendors and entertainment partners!

- ☀ Boordy Vineyards
- ☀ Charm City Clue Room
- ☀ Charm City Meadworks
- ☀ DJ Kee Bee
- ☀ Forever Cottman 360
- ☀ Guilford Hall Brewery
- ☀ Hard Rock Café
- ☀ Lytos Vodka
- ☀ Milkhouse Brewery
- ☀ Mobtown Brewing Company
- ☀ P.N.B. Mother Shuckers
- ☀ Pariah Brewing Company
- ☀ Sandy Bottom Cocktails
- ☀ Verde
- ☀ Waffle-lious



GLOW

PLAY IT FORWARD

PORT DISCOVERY'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY GLOW PARTY

On Friday, April 12, 2024, Port Discovery hosted its annual signature fundraiser – Play It Forward. This year, we were thrilled to invite guests into our newly renovated Atrium for a glow-it-up gala. We had a sold-out crowd of notable guests and raised nearly \$300,000 in support of the PlayMakers access program.





PLAY IT FORWARD SPONSORS

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Thank You!

Thank you to all of our supporters who gave in the past year! Your donations were essential for Port Discovery as we reaffirmed our role as a community partner, learning lab, and resource for all families.

The list below represents gifts and donations made across all museum campaigns between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024

Organizations

Aegon Transamerica Foundation
Allegis
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American Trading and Production Corporation
Arts for Learning Maryland
Association of Children's Museums
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Thank You!

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Thank You!

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Thank You!

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Founded in 1998 and located in Baltimore City's Inner Harbor, Port Discovery is the region's preeminent children's museum. Port Discovery's mission is to provide unique opportunities and high-quality experiences that make play accessible, educational, and fun for all. Our work is driven by the vision to foster joy, connections, laughter, and learning through purposeful play. We believe in a world where the value of learning through play is recognized and respected, backed by the science that demonstrates the power of play to transform the lives of children (and their families).

With 80,000 square feet of exhibits, experiences, and programs, a day at Port Discovery encourages children to use their imagination, explore how things work, build confidence, and learn and practice social and emotional skills. Since opening in 1998, the Museum has served over 5.5 million visitors as one of the Mid-Atlantic region's leading children's museums and is one of the top four most visited museums in Baltimore.



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