10 YEARS OF INSPIRING SCIENTIFIC WONDER, LEARNING, AND PURSUIT

20 ANNUAL 25 REPORT







HOMEWOOD SCIENCE CENTER

2016 10 2026



NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Inspiring Scientific Wonder, Learning, and Pursuit

Dear Friends,

FOR TEN YEARS, Homewood Science Center has been a place where **curiosity** is welcomed, **questions** are encouraged, and families discover the **joy of science** together. Our mission is simple yet powerful: to inspire scientific wonder, learning, and pursuit — and to ensure that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to meaningful STEM experiences.

This report tells a story of possibility — and it begins with you. What started ten years ago with the vision and support of the Village of Homewood has grown into a vibrant community science center, made possible by the generosity of our donors, partners, and supporters. Together, you have helped Homewood Science Center inspire scientific wonder, learning, and pursuit for children and families across the Chicago Southland.

Thank you for believing in the power of science to open doors and bring communities together.

Warm regards,
EDIE DOBREZ

MISSION + IMPACT SNAPSHOT

A Year of Impact

STEM SATURDAYS

3,979 visits

19% increase from 2024

In 2025, nearly half of registered households returned 3 or more times

FIELD TRIPS

5,422 STUDENTS

68% low income

84% minorities

27 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

70 SCHOOL AND ORGANIZATIONS

SUMMER CAMPS

Hosted **114 STUDENTS**, ages 5-14, in **9 different camps**

GIRLS STEAM

81% of Girls STEAM attendees developed **new education** & **career interests**

127 students attending Title 1 schools

STEM Saturdays

Deepening Engagement at Homewood Science Center



In 2025, nearly half of registered households returned three or more times. This dramatic increase in repeat engagement reflects the strength of STEM Saturdays, the trust of families, and the value of free, accessible, hands-on STEM learning experiences.

WHY THIS MATTERS

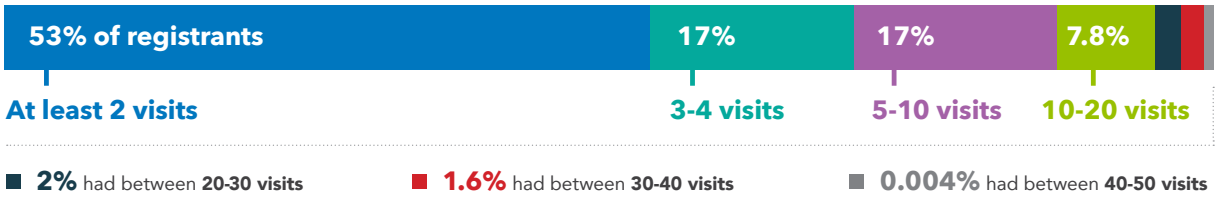
Repeat visits indicate strong program quality and relevance

Families are building long-term relationships with the Science Center

Sustained engagement supports deeper learning, confidence, and curiosity over time

2025 - 3,979 VISITS

% of repeat visits by households



- **2%** had between **20-30 visits**
- **1.6%** had between **30-40 visits**
- **0.004%** had between **40-50 visits**

> *This is a **wonderful** place for kids to explore STEM!*

> *My child really enjoyed the Math Magic area. **It made math interesting** as a child who often gets discouraged.*

Summer Camps

A Summer of Exploration, Confidence, and STEM Growth

We partnered with STEAM & Dream Liberation Labs for the first time to cohost 4 new summer camps. STEAM & Dream brings the programs they normally teach in schools to life as summer camps at Homewood Science Center.



114 Students

AGES 5 - 14

9 different camps

> *My kids have participated in several summer camps over the years, & have loved every second of it!*



Field Trips

Supporting Educators Through Immersive STEM Learning

The Homewood Center team added new topics, encouraging repeat attendance by schools and groups. New topics include Habitat Adventure: Animals & Plants, Lights & Shadows: Exploring Physics & Art and The Power of Energy.

Our Field Trips this year saw an **increase of 13%** attendance

27 districts

70 schools and organizations

Hands-on learning projects were very engaging, and students showed much more participation in this environment than they do at school. The kids really seemed to have a great time and learned a lot.

Funded in part by Cook County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)



Girls STEAM

NEW in 2025 - Aesha Jackson STEAM Leader Award

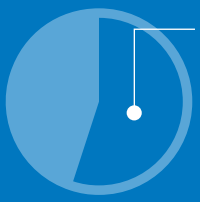
The Aesha Jackson STEAM Leader Award is dedicated to the memory of Aesha Jackson, a passionate engineer and advocate for young minds in STEM. As a young professional, Aesha dedicated time to mentoring and inspiring students, especially girls, to explore careers in STEM.

127 **students** attending Title 1 schools

35 **professional women** representing STEAM education & careers



81% say Girls STEAM helped them develop new education and career interests



54.8% say they see themselves pursuing a STEAM career in their future



98.8% say they feel confident about themselves after attending Girls STEAM Celebration

I loved how interactive and hands-on the stations were. I loved the whole experience today.

I had a revelation of a career path that I have considered. Multiple medical staff presenters boosted my confidence.

I had an amazing time today, very inspiring and very motivated.

Conservation Ecology

Middle School Internship

The program's demographic diversity remains a hallmark, with African American students comprising the largest group, followed by Caucasian, Hispanic/Latinx, and Mixed Ethnicity participants.



43 interns from **5** school districts (& the homeschool community)

All responding families either **"strongly agreed"** or **"agreed"** that their child shared what they learned about ecology or conservation at home

My son has participated in several sessions over the last couple of years and each session he is excited to find out what the program topic will be, and which students will return.

Chicago Southland STEM Network

A platform for diverse stakeholders to collaborate on regional STEM education and workforce development

SPRING 2025

Scott Tillman-Franklin, *STEAM & Dream Liberation Labs*

Mission: To close the STEM exposure gap and improve the futures of Black & Brown youth through mentorship and hands-on culturally affirming programming that fosters their STEM identities and empowers them to address real-world challenges with their imagination.

FALL 2025

Creative Placemaking Public Convening

The proposed list of Creative Placemaking projects were discussed with the public.

Projects were designed to spark wonder and engage families through interactive science, technology, engineering, art, and math experiences.

First Robotics/First Lego League

FIRST TECH CHALLENGE TEAM

(7th-12 grade)

Tech Ninja Team celebrates 11 years!

13 Students
(60% growth from last year)

FIRST LEGO LEAGUE

Two teams with 13 students

Both teams were awarded the **Rising All Star Award** at the regional tournament



Donations

INDIVIDUALS

DONATION AMOUNT $250 AND UP

Abby Reiner
Ann & Dale Mitchell
Ann & Nicholas Oehmen Foundation
Barbara Edwards
Brent & Maggie Bachus
Celeste & John Kralovec
Cindy & Rich Dobrez
Daria Terrell
Dave & Sue Riefe
David & Jennifer Dreyfuss
Dean Ferracane
Deb & Ray Walton
Debbie Berman
Deen Sokoya
Elizabeth & John Oliver
Jane & Tom Baffes
Jay Heiferman
Jeff McClain
Jerome Dreyfuss Trust
John Yast
Kari McGlinnen
Kathleen Orr
Kathy & Tom Blakemore
Kin Kong & Jim Grisus
Laura Murray
Lisa Cin
Mary Harrell
Michelle & Cameron Nelson
Pat Barker
Phil & Donna Milord
Ron Wexler
Stephanie & Rob Applebaum
Steve Dalessio
Willa R. Lee

CORPORATE

Dober
Optiver US LLC
Enbridge Energy
The Weglarz Company
ComEd
Illinois Vehicle Auto Insurance
Morrison Container Handling Solutions
Bank Financial

ORGANIZATIONS

Justinian Society of Lawyers
Flossmoor Service League
PMMI Education & Training Foundation
Suburban Service League
A Piece of Pie Donations
Day One Provisions & Events
Chicagoland Food Science Foundation

GRANTS

Bosch Community Fund
Cook County's Community Development Block Grant
Cook County's Creative Placemaking Grant
NBCUniversal Local Impact Grant
Special thanks to the **Farley Family Charitable Foundation** & the **Village of Homewood**