

# Environmental Learning Center, Inc. Annual Report 2022-2023





a Letter from your Executive Director

Dear ELC Friends,

We are so grateful for our hard-working staff, board and committee members, and daily volunteers. Our members, donors, guests, and program participants are a cherished part of our ELC family. Our 64 acres of wild Florida habitat is uniquely situated in the heart of the Indian River Lagoon. The ELC is committed to providing quality, engaging, and relevant environmental education for all ages of community members, from toddlers to teens to seniors. We strive daily to enhance our offerings and beautify our campus for our visitors. While much has been accomplished this year and it is important to reflect on those achievements, we remain focused on the vast amount of work to be done to restore, preserve, and improve this special campus. Please join us in an even bigger way this year to help us achieve these ambitious goals.

The Fiscal Year 7/1/22-6/30/23 was another year of growth for the ELC!

- Educational Program Participants nearly doubled (from 4,145 to 7,860 participants)
- Program hours increased by 15% (from 4,347 to 4,974 hours)
- Visitation increased by 18% (from 20,802 to 24,513 visitors)
- Pontoon guests increased by a whopping 71% (from 3,054 to 5,210 passengers)
- Membership increased by 24% (from 727 to 894 memberships)
- Scholarships increased by 27% (289 to 368 recipients)
- ~6,500 volunteer hours were contributed (for a total value of over \$200k!)
- All 3rd and 4th-grade public school students visited campus for hands-on feet-wet learning.
- Many other grade levels took field trips to the ELC, too.
- We hosted a myriad of memorable community gatherings at our unique event venue.
- Our outreach programs continue to expand.

Please reach out to me to discuss how you can be a change-maker in our community. There is no gift or skill that is too big or too small and it takes us all working together to make the seemingly unachievable a reality. Please join us, at the very heart of our community, to create the future of our dreams.

In appreciation and service,

part

Barbara Schlitt Ford Executive Director Barb@DiscoverELC.org

## Our Mission

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.

Our Vision

The ELC is an attractive destination for people of all ages to frequently return to for adventure, learning and wellness. Our visitors will experience and appreciate the benefits of immersion in nature, understand the value of a healthy environment and be inspired to create a sustainable world.

> Using the lens of the Indian River Lagoon, the ELC fosters community awareness, appreciation and concern for the environment. We promote the use of 21st century knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, solve current environmental problems and prevent new ones.

Not only do we educate people about these issues, the ELC's goal is to empower people to be a part of the solution. *Because everyone deserves a healthy planet.* 



a Letter from our Board Chair

At the Environmental Learning Center, we are proud to say that we are at the heart of environmental education for the Indian River community. During this past fiscal year, we once again received almost 25,000 visitors to our campus, conducted over 500 guided tours, and hosted over three hundred summer campers. These numbers include a field trip for every third and fourth grader in the Indian River County School District. This is an immersive experience that opens their eyes and hearts to the natural wonders of the Indian River Lagoon.

We depend upon twenty professionals and over one hundred volunteers to provide these programs seven days a week. They are led by Barbara Schlitt Ford, who works tirelessly to provide these services, and my heartfelt thanks go out to her and the staff for all they do.

My thanks also extends to the many donors who give to the ELC. Each year we must raise close to \$2 million dollars to support our programs and preserve the campus infrastructure. Your financial contributions enable us to keep it all going.

In addition, we have just completed a new master plan that is designed to provide ELC with a blueprint for the future. We are all excited about the programs we have in place, the projects that are planned for the future, and the significant work that we are doing to help make a difference for our community and the health of the fragile ecosystem of Indian River Lagoon.

I encourage you to come visit the ELC campus, and please do not hesitate to reach out to Barb or me to learn more about what we do and the ways that you can help.

Respectfully,

Richard P. Brennan

# **OUR ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Highlighting the successes of our purpose-driven mission

Looking Back Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



24,513 Visitors



4,974 Educator Run **Program Hours** 

368 Scholarship Fund Beneficiaries







5.210 Pontoon Boat Passengers

894 Members

7.860 **Educational Program** Participants Served



You Can Make a Difference! Volunteer Opportunities Include:

- Aquaria Touch Tank & Discovery Station Docent
- Campus Maintenance/Gardening
- Outreach & Hospitality
- Pontoon Boat Guide
- Guest Services & Greeter
- And more!



## More than 6.500 hours volunteered



\$206,700 **Estimated Total Value** of Volunteer Service

#### Want to become a volunteer?

Email Volunteer@DiscoverELC.org or call 772-589-5050 Fill out our online application at DiscoverELC.org/volunteer

Leadership

Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Environmental Learning Center Board

John Daniels, Chair Don Barr, Vice Chair Tyler Puttick, Secretary Tarik Kawi, Treasurer Rich Brennan, Director Tim Buhl, Director David Griffis, Director Carol Lincoln, Director Shirley Nichols, Director Megan Osteen, Director Carly Barnes Witteck, Director Barbara Schlitt Ford, Ex-Officio

### 2023-2024 Environmental Learning Center Board

Rich Brennan, Chair John Daniels, Vice Chair Tyler Puttick, Secretary Tarik Kawi, Treasurer David Griffis, Director Carol Lincoln, Director Shirley Nichols, Director Megan Osteen, Director Barbara Schlitt Ford, Ex-Officio

## Financial Statement of Environmental Learning Center, Inc.

Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 (Unaudited)

Revenue	
Contributions	\$1,327,474
Programs/Special Events	\$161,228
Other	\$60,280
Total Revenue	\$1,548,982
Expenses	
Program Services	
Educational Programs	\$1,292,161
Support Services	
Management and General	\$124,553
Resource Development	\$180,426
Total Expenses	\$1,597,140
Net Income	(\$48, 158)
Net Assets	
Net Assets Beginning of the Year	\$4,693,878
Net Assets End of Year	\$4,822,533
Change in Net Assets	\$128,655



<u>Mays to Give</u>

#### Your gift is important. Support the Environmental Learning Center.

**Make a gift.** Your donation supports our important work of educating, inspiring, and empowering all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being. Gifts of appreciated stock or a charitable distribution from your IRA are also welcome.

**Visit campus.** Become a member, bring a friend, or host an event at the ELC.

**Volunteer.** We are always looking for volunteers for guest services, touch tank, events, grounds, etc., or talk with us about opportunities to serve on a committee, council, or board.

**Corporate Partners.** There are multiple opportunities for you, your family or your business to sponsor an event, or donate to help us continue the work we are doing.

**Tribute gifts.** Make a donation in honor or in memory of a friend, loved one, or event (birthday, wedding, anniversary).

**Planned giving.** Remember the ELC in your will and make a lasting impact.

Email Give@DiscoverELC.org or call 772-589-5050 for more information.



a Letter from our Director of Philanthropy

Exciting Plans Ahead – Your Support Makes It Possible!

I want to take a moment to express my wholehearted gratitude for your unwavering support of our organization over the years. As you can see from the extensive listing in this report, there are many involved in sustaining the Environmental Learning Center. Your generosity has been instrumental in helping us achieve our mission, and we are excited to share our plans with you.

As a new staff member, I am excited to look ahead and am filled with enthusiasm for what the future holds. Some of our near-term priorities include

- Strengthening our education and event offerings making the most of our incredible 64-acre campus, outdoor education pavilion, paddle and pontoon excursions, classes, and programs for kids through adults
- Continuing to maintain financial integrity and strength making the most of each dollar donated
- Striving to maintain our reputation as a fantastic place to visit and work
- Building and enhancing our volunteer base (including board and committee members) to drive community funding for a thriving ELC

None of these goals would be attainable without the continued donations of dedicated individuals and organizations. Your contributions have made a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals, and we invite you to be a part of our exciting journey forward.

Once again, thank you for your steadfast commitment to our cause. I look forward to working with you to achieve remarkable things and bring positive change to the heart of your Indian River Lagoon.

Warm regards,

Hudi Jeone Royals

Heidi Leone Royals Director of Philanthropy Heidi@discoverELC.org



The Society for Environmental Education is our prestigious group of major donors with exclusive benefits. ELC is the heart of Environmental Education in Indian River County, and by joining SEE with an annual unrestricted gift of \$1,000 or more, you are standing alongside us in our crucial mission. Together, we are educating, inspiring, and empowering all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being. To find out more about how you can join this group, please contact the Philanthropy team.

#### Society Members Fiscal 2022-2023

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#### With appreciation Donors 2022-2023

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#### Donations from January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Every effort is made to be accurate in our donor list. If we have omitted or misspelled your name, we sincerely apologize. Please contact Give@DiscoverELC.org or call the ELC at 772-589-5050 so we can correct our records. Thank you for your support.

Education For all ages



Little Wonders Free Toddler Nature Class 18 months-4 Years

> Nature Explorers 4-6 Years

Young Explorers K-1

IRC School District 3rd & 4th Grade Field Trips

Literacy on the Lagoon

**Biotech Internships** 

Y-ELC Youth Environmental Leaders Corps Middle and High School

> Summer Camp School Break Camp

Paid Internships High School & College

Community Outreach Pontoon Boat Tours Canoeing & Kayaking Nature Walks Walking Meditation Nature Inspired Art Series Member Events Custom Programs for Groups





### 2022-2023

Pontoon Dock Rebuild

One of the highlights of the 2022-2023 year is the almost completed Pontoon Dock rebuild. The new dock project took several years of planning and permitting before ELC could begin construction. The new dock will provide a more attractive, safe, and efficient facility to support the educational and environmental mission of the ELC.

Ray and Susan Malamet's lead gift began funding for the rebuild. A donation from Hal and Brenda Reiter, a grant from Florida Inland Navigation District, funding from John's Island Foundation along with several other individual gifts made the project possible. We also have to thank the staff at Indian River County for coordination with Florida Inland Navigation District and the bidding process. The anticipated completion date is November 15, 2023.







Our Collaborative Partnerships

Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Association of Indian River County Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge **Bia Brothers Bia Sisters** Boys & Girls Clubs of Indian River County **Brevard Zoo** Captain Hiram's River Challenge Triathlon Citv of Sebastian Clean Water Coalition of IRC Coastal Connections Coastal Conservation Association Cultural Council Of Indian River County Disney Vero Beach FAU Harbor Branch Florida Department of Environmental Protection Florida Master Naturalist Program Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory Florida Native Plant Society Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Friends of the Spoil Islands Gifford Youth Achievement Center Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Homeless Children's Foundation of IRC Indian River CARES IRC Recreation Department IRC Solid Waste Disposal District **IRC Stormwater Division** IRL Aquatic Preserves **IRL National Estuary Program** Indian River Neighborhood Association Indian River County Chamber Of Commerce

Indian River Land Trust Jabebo Keep Indian River Beautiful Leave No Trace Master Gardeners UF/IFAS Extension Mental Health Association Mental Health Collaborative Moonshot Community Action Network ORCA Pelican Island Audubon Society Pelican Island Conservation Society Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge **Quail Valley Charities** Saint Edward's School School District Of Indian River County Sea and Shoreline Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce Sebastian Inlet District Smithsonian Marine Station St. Johns River Water Management District Sustainable Events Network Sustainable Kashi The Learning Alliance The Willow School U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service United Against Poverty United Way of Indian River County Vero Beach Museum of Art Waste Management Youth Guidance Mentoring Academy



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