FIFTY YEARS AGO, OUR COMMUNITY SAVED THIS GREENSPACE FROM THE PATH OF A PLANNED FREEWAY. IT WAS A REMARKABLE TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF CITIZEN ACTIVISM.

Those individuals who came together in 1966 to defend this land and preserve it in perpetuity did more than just set the land aside — they had the foresight to know that the land could be in service to something more. The community saw the potential that these woods, wetlands, and streams had for educating, training and fostering generations of environmental stewards who would continue a community legacy of involvement, passion, and care for the fragile beauty of nature in an urban environment. With amazing vision and a grassroots effort unlike any other our community has seen, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes was born.
From its beginning, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes was envisioned as a place for learning, where the native landscape could be used to teach natural science concepts and inspire environmental stewardship. Its 20 acres sit amidst the 300-acre Shaker Parklands on the eastern edge of Cleveland, so was viewed as a place that could become an integral part of the surrounding neighborhoods and serve area school districts. A Nature Center in this location could celebrate the beauty and natural resources inherent in the identity of these communities. It was immediately recognized as a special place and an invaluable addition to the otherwise urban landscape.
OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES AT THE NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES OFFER UNPARALLELED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES — ABOUT OURSELVES, OTHERS AND OUR NATURAL WORLD

“Aside from the outstanding educational programs the Nature Center offers, the conserved space itself serves as a wise schoolmaster. The marsh, the prairie, the vernal pool, the forest and gardens whisper lessons for those who wish to listen and it is imperative that we contribute to its future. The coming enhancements will allow thousands to establish profound connections to nature and experience the boundless ways learning can take place outside of the four walls of a classroom.

— CINDY KLUG, CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

In 1971, the National Park Service named the Nature Center a National Environmental Education Landmark, one of the first organizations to be so recognized by the Park Service. In addition, the Park Service designated the Nature Center a National Environmental Study Area, noting the unique educational opportunities offered by the diverse habitats found in an urban setting. The Shaker Parklands are also on the National Register of Historic Places and considered an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society. It is classified as an official wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

The impact of the Nature Center on both our youngest and oldest learners is tangible. We cannot overstate the importance of having a place such as this where learning can happen outdoors, immersed in nature.

Remarkably, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes receives no local tax dollars to maintain and activate these 20 acres, which is owned by the City of Cleveland.
LEARNING HAPPENS HERE EVERY DAY

... In boisterous group experiences for school children and campers.

... In quiet, solitary moments for individuals.

... In shared experiences of awe and wonder for families.

... In ways that inspire stewardship of the natural resources throughout our neighborhood, our region, and our planet.
The Nature Center is developing students as Outdoor Scientists and Environmental Stewards through the ASK! program that is unique to the Cleveland area and revered by other districts across the United States.

— ERIC GORDON, CEO
CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
OUR IMPACT IS SIGNIFICANT

TODAY, THE NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES IS A PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE AND IN ALL SEASONS. EACH YEAR, WE SERVE AND IMPACT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE FROM ACROSS OUR REGION. FIFTY YEARS AFTER OUR FOUNDING, WE NOW ANNUALLY WELCOME:

40,000+
VISITORS WHO COME TO WALK OR RUN THE TRAILS, BIRD WATCH OR EXPLORE THE HABITATS THROUGHOUT EACH SEASON

13,500+
STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION WHO PARTICIPATE IN HANDS-ON SCIENCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2,975
CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO LEARN ABOUT THEIR ROLES IN PROTECTING OUR PLANET THROUGH FAMILY PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS AND LECTURES

520
CHILDREN IN OUR RENOWNED SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM

500+
AREA RESIDENTS WHO ATTENDED OUR ANNUAL SALE OF NATIVE AND HOMEGROWN PLANTS

900
ADULTS AND CHILDREN WHO VOLUNTEER TO CLEAR INVASIVE SPECIES AND PLANT NATIVES TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT OUR EIGHT CLASSIFIED HABITATS

93%
OF CMSD STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN OUR APPLIED SCIENCE FOR KIDS (ASK!) PROGRAM DEMONSTRATED INCREASED KNOWLEDGE IN HOW TO CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

92%
OF PRE-K TEACHERS THOUGHT ASK! VERY MUCH ENABLED THE STUDENTS TO SEE THE IMPACTS OF RECYCLING AND LANDFILLS

75%
OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS RECALLED A NATIVE BIRD SEEN ON THEIR FIELD EXPERIENCE

100%
OF TEACHERS GAINED NEW IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING THE OUTDOORS INTO THEIR LESSONS

One of our most impactful programs is the Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) Program, which currently serves 5,652 preschool, kindergarten, and first grade students from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). This program combines hands-on classroom activities, field experiences at the Nature Center, and professional development for teachers to help enhance CMSD’s science curriculum.

The ASK! Program has been growing over 30% each year. During the 2017–2018 school year, we saw 1,500 more Cleveland students than the year before.

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A BOLD AND EXCITING PLAN: A $6 MILLION CAMPAIGN FOR THE NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES

We are all passionate about preserving this urban oasis and ensuring a bright future for the next generation of environmental stewards. When you step into the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, time seems to stand still and allows for deeper learning and connection with nature and others in our lives. Without an effort to enhance a space and resources such as this, we risk losing an invaluable community treasure that would be deeply felt for decades to come.

— GRAHAM HEARNS, CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

THE NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES HAS EMBARKED UPON A $6 MILLION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO ACTIVATE OUR BELOVED PLACE IN NEW AND ENGAGING WAYS.

Just as the region came together 50 years ago to preserve these 20 acres, today supporters are coming together to raise funds for this next important effort. Individuals, foundations, municipalities and corporations are all stepping up to show they recognize the importance of the educational experiences that happen here, in the beauty and diversity of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

The renovation and restoration will be paced across several years so that portions of the Nature Center grounds continue to be available to the region’s residents and students.

The success of this ambitious effort will be evident as children and adults make stronger connections within our woods and wetlands — connections to each other and to the land itself. Success will be apparent when each visitor leaves the Nature Center more deeply inspired to protect the beauty and bounty of our planet — in transformative ways as well as small, personal efforts.
The renovation, restoration, and enhancement plan includes:

- **Construction of an amphitheater** at the rear of the Visitor’s Center creates a unique and accessible educational venue that is 25% larger and connects with trails and the parking lot. Completed Fall 2018.

- **Reconstruction of the iconic All People’s Trail** to improve accessibility and enlarge gathering spaces for classes to spend more time in discussion and observation along its path.

- **Restoration and maintenance of 20 acres of habitats** that provide the very content for learning here at the Nature Center but have become significantly threatened by invasive species and damaged by stream erosion.

- **Addition of a nature play area** for children’s gross motor skill development, with use of natural structures and materials in ways uniquely suited to the surrounding Stearns Trail.

- **New interpretative, wayfinding and welcome signage** at all trailheads and along both signature trails to orient and educate the thousands of visitors who explore our grounds.

- **Creation of an observation deck** with seating for groups alongside our mini-marsh to bring our wetlands programming to life for students.

- **A new pavilion** creates a four-season space for visitors to enjoy while accommodating classes year-round and greatly increasing capacity to host school field experiences. This enhanced space provides additional rental space for events and the potential to increase earned revenue.
YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO FOSTER OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY NOW TO IMPROVE THIS REMARKABLE PLACE THROUGH ONGOING RENOVATION, RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENTS TO THE EXPERIENCES THAT ENGAGE PEOPLE HERE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

The $6 million plan is solidly based on the belief that the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is an outdoor classroom. It is a vision with an eye on today, as well as the long-term sustainability of this natural preserve and the visitor experiences that take place within it.

Vital restoration to aging infrastructure is needed now to not only enhance the learning experiences that already happen across our trails and diverse habitats, but to improve these experiences through new and exciting interpretations and amenities to further attract and engage our broad range of visitors.

Similar to how each person involved in the Freeway Fight of the mid-1960s played an invaluable role, there is a vital role for you to play now in Enhancing Your Outdoor Classroom: The Campaign for the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

NOW IS YOUR TIME TO INVEST IN PRESERVING AND ACTIVATING THIS TREASURED PLACE

We look forward to taking a walk in these woods with you and talking about how your support can make a meaningful impact on the success of our campaign, and on the next 50 years of outdoor learning here at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

KAY CARLSON, PRESIDENT & CEO
216-321-5935 ext. 227
carlson@shakerlakes.org

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Contributions to the campaign can be made in the form of a one-time gift of cash, or a gift of appreciated assets such as IRAs, stock or securities. For your convenience, gifts may be payable over a three-year period.
As stewards of one of the best community resources in the Cleveland area, both individually and collectively, we share a strong desire to enhance this space for future generations.

— MICHAEL NOVAK, CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR
OUR COMMUNITY SAVED THIS UNIQUE GREEN SPACE NOT ONLY TO PRESERVE THE HABITATS, BUT TO PROVIDE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES THAT ENGAGE AND EDUCATE ALL.

TODAY, WE ARE CALLED TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN THAT LEGACY BY INVESTING IN OUR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM TO FURTHER ENHANCE THOSE EXPERIENCES — BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, PERSONAL AND SHARED — THAT WILL ENRICH OUR COMMUNITY NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.