2023 Annual Report

*The Mission of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum is to educate others about Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey, and in doing so, celebrate his life, his work, his philosophy, and his legacy.*

I am pleased to provide this Annual Report for the Museum. The Liberty Hyde Bailey Board and staff worked diligently to provide dynamic programming for our members, residents, and visitors. We also hosted events by other South Haven organizations, conducted school visits and gave tours of the museum and gardens to many visitors to South Haven. The Museum hosted over 1,500 guests this year!

The Bailey Museum is the only museum in South Haven on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a Michigan Historic Site and a City of South Haven public park. We are committed to the preservation of this 170 year old historic home and truly appreciate the city’s support. Here is a brief summary of our activities this past year. Please consider joining or renewing your supportive Membership. We have omitted photos this year in the Report as our new Social Media Manager Ashleigh Bomgaars has enhanced our presence and a lot of great information is available now through many social outlets.

*Dan Williamson, Board Chair*

Key Accomplishments:

Programming:

1. We started a new educational family activity this year - Story Walk®, a series of books which are ‘planted’ in our backwoods and are free and open to the public during daylight hours. These are lovely children’s books laminated on panels, with a separate page per panel. The book is read as the kids run with glee through the backwoods. We started after Ice Breaker in February, and we will ‘plant’ story #11 early in December. This was a great experience for all involved and we tied it in with other family events. We are committed to continue the program through 2024.
2. We worked with area nonprofits to offer diverse educational programs for both children and adults. We hosted numerous school visits this year. As always, all the 3rd grade classes visited Dr. Bailey. The SH Home schooled kids made it for an enjoyable and educational visit. We connected with the Pullman/Fennville Girl Scouts and about 22 Scouts and parents came for a day of education and craft projects. The STEM group in SH also made a visit and they have about 20 students. We also hosted the Bangor “Wood School” that is one of the last one room schools in west Michigan. What a wonderful visit with about 25 K-8 students. It was really interesting to see how well they all worked together, benefiting from the age spread. The kids were really impressed that young Dr. Bailey also attended a one room school – until he learned enough to go upstairs to the 8th grade.
3. We again hosted the Van Buren County Conservation District for their annual tree ­and dune grass (1st time) sale. The Museum hosted Deane Wassink from Olde Paths Industries for a technical presentation attended by over 25 local property owners. <VanBurenCD.Org> and <MyDuneGrass.com>
4. The Museum hosted the South Haven Student History Club for their annual presentation of their History Projects. This has been a wonderful evening each time the Museum hosted the event; meeting young students, hearing their presentations, talking with them, in an ideal National Historic Landmark.

Bailey’s Budding Naturalists:

1. This was the 9th year of the Budding Naturalists program. For the last 3 years Sarett Nature Center Naturalists have taught the camp - 30 children attended this year.
2. We have already confirmed Sarett Nature Center for next year. Also, we are working to finalize a ‘younger student’ session for kids who we did not host in the past. Our Board Trustee Sondra Sutton is working to coordinate the curriculum with Sarett.
3. We built 2 ‘raised bed’ gardens at the east end of the backwoods, and every BBN student planted their own tomato, pepper, or squash plant. It was a great success, and during different events other kids (and BBNs who came back) would pick and eat the tomatoes right off the vine. What a blast that was.

Other Events:

1. We started the year with our IceBreaker exhibit in front of City Hall with a wonderful ice sculpture by a Museum friend Mike Kiefer. Imagine my surprise when after expecting ‘Sponge Bob’ I returned to find ‘Gary’, Sponge Bob’s pet snail. All the kids and grandparents knew Gary, and loved him, their parents had no clue.
2. We also kicked off our weekly ‘The Bailey Moment’, courtesy of COSY 103.7FM and Paul Layendecker. Every Friday morning at 8.20 I join Paul live on the radio to highlight something relevant and timely (usually) and then update the listeners on our upcoming events at the Museum. It has been very educational for me and the listeners as I get to learn something new about Dr. Bailey every week. The broadcasts are available through the Museum’s website and also COSY’s website.
3. Dr. Bailey and his support team of BBN students and parents participated in the Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Blueberry Festival parades throughout the year. This will be repeated in 2024.
4. The Museum was the host location for the First and Last sessions of this year’s MSU-Ext’s Michigan Master Naturalists program. About 40 adults participated in the program in the region including 2 hours of lecture and 2 hours of outdoor investigation and learning. More information can be found at [www.canr.msu.edu/michigan-master-naturalist](http://www.canr.msu.edu/michigan-master-naturalist). The regional program is headed up by our Board Trustee Beth Clawson.
5. We ended our season with our second Pumpkin Walk in the ‘backwoods’, held in partnership with The Mitten Children’s Museum on a beautiful fall evening. About 200 goblins joined the fun with their parents. Of course, the Ghost of Dr. Bailey joined the Spooktacular event.

Partnerships & Supporters:

The City of South Haven, The Greater South Haven Community Foundation, MI Humanities, Michigan Arts & Culture Council, Sarett Nature Center, Van Buren Conservation District, MSU Extension, South Haven Garden Club, South Haven History Club, The Mitten Children’s Museum, Christopher Hart Horticultural Consultant, Rotary Club, and many other generous South Haven Chamber of Commerce members. And of course, our valued Members.

National Historic Site Major Accomplishments: Grounds - new gardens, children’s raised gardening beds, cement and grading of north area of museum to take out old cement tile that posed a significant tripping hazard.

Financial Summary: Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Revenue** |  | **Expenses** |  |
| Individ/Business Donations | 4,773 | Operating Expenses | 52,282 |
| Grants | 12,026 | Collection Expenses | 6,686 |
| Corp/Other Contributions | 31,004 | Facilities and Equip | 6,100 |
| Membership Dues/Donations | 11,820 | **Total Expenses** | **65,068** |
| Fund Raising | 6,456 |  |  |
| Classes/Workshops/Conference | 3,810 |  |  |
| Retail Gift Shop Sales | 400 |  |  |
| Interest-Savings, Short Term | 224 |  |  |
| **Total Revenue** | **70,513** |  |  |

Please come and visit the Bailey Museum & Gardens. Learn about early South Haven when it was a frontier town, and how the area significantly contributed to Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey’s lifelong love, study, and contributions to the world.

Board of Trustees:

Mr. Daniel Williamson, Chair; Ms. Joan Hiddema, Treasurer; Ms. Wendi Onuki, City of South Haven Representative; Ms. Cheyenne Sloan, Board Member (MSU-Ext), Ms. Beth Clawson, Board Member (MSU-Ext) and Secretary; Ms. Robin Reva, Board Member and Artist in Residence; Ms. Carrie Sauter, Board Member, Ms. Lia Will, VBCD Administrative Assistant, Ms. Sondra Sutton, South Haven Play School.

All of us at the Museum wish you the very best, and we look forward to your visit.

